Tanner
623

A Gracious Reproof TO PHARASAICAL SAINTS,

Causlesly murmuring at

GODS MERCIES TOWARD PENITENT SINNERS.

In Explication of *Luc.* 15. 30, 31.

Written by JOHN HORNE sometimes Minister of *Lin Allhallows.*

Psal. 119. 1. 2, 3.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.
Blessed are they that keep his Testimonies, and seek him with the whole heart.
They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.
But — *As for transgressors woe to them, for destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.* Psal. 37. 38. Prov. 10. 29.
Is thine eye evil because mine is good? Matth. 20. 15.

London, Printed for Tho. Passenger at the three Bibles on London-bridge. 1668.

Thom. Tanner Cur

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

TO THE
READER.

Reader,

WHither thou beeſt Saint or Sinner (and one of them aſſuredly thou art) thou maiſt through Gods bleſſing find ſomething uſeful for thee, & I hope worthy thy peruſall, and ſerious conſideration in this inſuing Treatiſe. If thou beeſt one that knoweſt the grace of God in truth, and thereby art ſanctifyed to God and followeſt after holineſs, here is that that may perſwade thee, and ſhew thee cauſe to be holy ſtill, and to go on in denying all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world; abiding in Chriſt, and walking with God. Both as it ſets before thee the good and bleſſed ſtate of thoſe that ſo do, and as it ſhews the miſerable and ſad ſtate of thoſe

that do otherwiſe; and eſpecially of ſuch as having taſted the graciouſneſs of the Lord, withdraw from him again, and after they have begun to be good, turn to do badly, forſaking the way of uprightneſs, to walk in the ways of darkneſs, *Prov. 2. 13. of which therefore alſo it doth admoniſh thee. However ſtrongly thou think thou ſtandeſt, that thou take heed of falling. of which there is need enough to be admoniſhed in this back ſliding (and truly, and too ſhamefully) adulterous and ſinful generation; Wherein they that depart from iniquity make themſelves a prey; and wherein men being frighted from, or ſcoffed and derided at for nothing ſo much as truth and piety; there is too general a temptation upon men to be afraid, or aſhamed to be (or however to confeſs and ſhew themſelves to be) ſeriouſly holy and religious. Atheiſme, Prophaneſs, Popery, and all manner of debauchery growing into faſhion, and nothing (ſcarce) looked upon as more obſolete and antick, than ſoundneſs and ſincerity with true zeal and fervency in the exerciſe and practiſe of the truth of Religion. And yet it alſo admoniſheth thee to beware of the leaven of Phariſees which is hypocriſie: of being too raſh and cenſorious in judging*

thoſe

those that having been prophane and evil livers, or abusers of God's grace and truth, return therefrom to a better mind; or of judging God's, and Christ's, or his Servants dealings with such, when by the profession of such persons, he, or evidently and apparently they, are more gracious and ready to receive sinners than thou wouldst have them. There is nothing more eminently discovered in God, than love and charity to the souls of men; whereof the whole Gospel, and all the holy men in the Scriptures bear their testimony, especially in his receiving repentant sinners. And therefore nothing should be more desired by us, and rejoyced in on their behalf, than their conversion to him, and finding his gracious acceptance. God's children should be (and are in some measure) like to God himself, who is their Father, and therefore as his elect, holy, and beloved, put on bowels of mercy, kindness, lowliness of mind, long-suffering — and above all charity, which is the bond of all perfection, as the Apostle exhorteth, Col. 3. 12. 14. *Nor doth any thing (scarce) make men liker the Devil than to endeavour to hinder or to repine at the conversion of sinners or God's mercy to them, as that was one concomitant (or pro-*

duct rather) of the Pharasees zeal and religion, their oppoſing Chriſt, and grudging at him, for his charity to ſinners; ſo, I ſuppoſe, it was none of the leaſt of the ingredients of that evil frame which occaſioned his ſtiling them the children of the Devil, Joh. 8. 44. Well may we be glad indeed, when we find any ſuch thing as a ſincere convert in theſe evil days, and God gracious to ſinners therein: When there are ſo many Apoſtates from God, ſo few Converts to him.

Converts there may be ſome to this or that opinion or practiſe, from ſome open prophanneſs, ſometimes to thriftineſs, and worldlineſs (and yet even ſuch converſions are not ſo frequent in theſe days, as from thriftineſs to prodagality and rudeneſs) ſometimes poßibly to ſome opinionative profeßion, or zealous endeavour after righteouſneſs, that is, not Gods, but mens own; but few that when they return, return to the Lord, Jer. 4. 1. to mind, and receive, and walk in the knowledg and faith of him, and his great goodneſs to mankind in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and ſo to behold his glory, as thereby to be changed into his image by the operation of his power and ſpirit, and ſo to worſhip God in the ſpirit, as teſti-

teſtifying of his grace in his Son. Phil. 3. 3. Rejoyce in Jeſus Chriſt, & have no confidence in the fleſh. *When we ſee any turning to this we have cauſe to be glad and rejoyce for them, for they turn from death to life, from miſery to ſalvation, and unſpeakable felicity. But alas! more play the Prodigals in going from Chriſt and God, and the living in the faith and knowledge of him as the fountain of life and righteouſneſs, to live upon either their outward or inward receits from him, their riches, friends, wit, parts, or their righteous frames and endeavours, receits, and attainments, (which lived upon will ſoon, with the Prodigals patrimony, be ſpent, and leave them to loſſe and beggary, or to ſervile drudgery and deſire of husks) then do imitate him in returning to God and Chriſt, to live in his houſe, and upon him, and his proviſion therein, the grace (not in us, but) in Chriſt Jeſus,* 2 Tim. 2. 1. *which is, and may be, matter of great lamentation. Yet, if thou beeſt a ſinner, walking in thy ſelf, thine own will, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, luſts, affections or appetites, and ſo not in Chriſt Jeſus, not in the way of underſtanding, not in the ſpirit, but in the fleſh, and ſo in a ſtate of ſin, (as ſuch there be great ſtore,*

both of perſons in a ſort zealous and of prophane) here is that that may move thee to repent and to turn to God therefrom. Both the evil and dangerouſneſs of the ſtate of ſin and ſinners, and the acceptableneſs to God of true and unfeined repentance in returning to Chriſt, and ſo to God in and by him is here toucht upon; and its largely evidenced, that God is ready to embrace ſuch as ſo do return, and to give them the moſt ſure ſigns and pledges of his mercy toward them, as having joy in their ſalvation. And indeed this is the main ſcope of the Parable herein paraphraſtically explicated, and of the Text opened and applyed, and by conſequence (of a great part at leaſt) of the enſuing diſcourſe, to commend to thee the great goodneſs of God (as to thoſe that walk with him in his ways, to which he invites thee in calling thee to repentance, ſo alſo) to thoſe that turn at his reproofs into his ways; in his readineſs to forgive ſins paſt through his forbearance, and to teſtifie his gladneſs for their eſcape from the dangers of deſtruction they were in while ſinning; in his giving them the comforts of his grace in Chriſt, and taking them under his moſt ſafe and ſatisfying protection and bleſſing. Surely, as its bet-

ter

ter to be feasting and making merry at home with a rich, liberal, and loving Father, than to be abroad among strangers (nay enemies) in a strange Country, keeping swine in the cold fields, and ready there to perish with hunger: So (and far more) better is it to be in God's fear, and in the faith of Jesus, walking in the ways of righteousness, and enjoying the comforts of the Holy Ghost, in the assured perswasions of God's favour towards us, and of eternal life and happiness, than to be the drudges and sworn vassels of sin and Satan, grapling with the stings of an accusing Conscience, and fears of God's most dreadful and everlasting wrath and vengeance, and hurried on in the ways of sin thereto by evil spirits, who rejoyce so much in nothing as in bringing men unto everlasting destruction. The assured hope of attaining which good things, and escaping which evil things, is in this Parable and discourse set clearly before thee, as to the good ground thereof, to be proved in an hearty turning to God in Christ by thee: And verily, the certainty of speeding well in any course is a marvailous great spur to the undertaking it; hope of profit and pleasure upon uncertain grounds usually draw men to great adven-

tures here, much more do certain. Behold here certain grounds of hoping for and expecting the greateſt profits and pleaſures that are poſsible, propoſed to thee to move thee to repentance. Even a certainty grounded upon God's word, who cannot lye; and Chriſt's accuſtomed grace to repentant ſinners, who being the Son of God, neither can nor will deceive us. Oh then mind, and be moved by them to ſerious and ſpeedy repentance; thy time is ſhort, thy life uncertain, if thou dye in thy ſins, all hope of mercy is for ever gone; lay hold therefore of the preſent opportunity while it is afforded thee, lay hold on eternal life, enter the ſtrait gate, ſet upon the holy race, and ſo run therein as thou mayſt obtain. Men will divers together run in an earthly race for an earthly prize of any great value, though they know before hand that but one of them ſhall obtain it; but in this heavenly race is a heavenly prize exceeding all earthly values, and all that run for it aright are ſure to obtain it; no ones getting it ſhall hinder another that runs with him. Yea (as in the Parable of the labourers in the Vineyard, Matth. 20.) they that ſet out a great deal later than others, may yet be at the race end as ſoon, and

obtain

obtain it as fully and certainly as they that ſet out before them. So that thou mayſt run at a certainty and fight, not as one that beats the Air, but to good purpoſe, if thou wilt but yet be perſwaded to ſet upon this heavenly race, and holy combate, againſt ſin and Sathan. Let the greatneſs of the gain then propoſed, of the pleaſures promiſed, of the ſatisfaction aſſured, and the greatneſs of the certainty of attaining them in a ſerious turning to God in Chriſt to ſeek after and endeavour for them, draw thee into a ſtedfaſt reſolution of quitting thy ways of ſin and falſhood, and embracing, and walking on the ways of righteouſneſs and ſalvation: And do it betimes, and without delay, leaſt thou defer too long, and the Devil, and Sin draw thee on by little and little, till they bring thee inevitably into Perdition.

But peradventure Satan will ſuggeſt unto thee, to hinder thee of the good both of theſe my advices, and of the whole following Treatiſe, ſuch thoughts as ſome men harbour in their hearts (yea, and ſome fear not to utter with their tongues) reaſoning to this purpoſe. All men are under one or other of theſe two abſolute Decrees, either of Election unto life, or of

Repro-

Reprobation to deſtruction, and therefore I muſt needs be under one of them alſo. If I be Elect (as I hope I am) then to what purpoſe is all your coſt and labour, for it is impoſſible for me to miſcarry, what ever I do, and however I live at preſent, my ſins cannot fruſtrate God's decree and purpoſe, nor may you, or any body elſe, lay any ſin to my charge. For who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? it is God that juſtifies; *and if he juſtifie me in my preſent ſtate, what need is there for me to repent that I may be juſtified? or who ſhall condemn me, ſeeing Chriſt's death is for me, and ſhall ſecure me from all my ſins paſt, preſent, and to come, ſo as they cannot harm me? and whereas no unclean thing may inherit God's kingdome, that cannot hurt me; for if I be elected, I ſhall and muſt at one time or other be ſo effectually called as againſt all my reſiſtances, and notwithſtanding all my preſent ſinnings, I ſhall obey, and ſo be waſhed and ſanctified, and ſhall againſt all fallings, or poſſibility of falling perſevere in grace to the injoyment of the inheritance: And why then may I not take the pleaſure of my ſins while I may, ſeeing they ſhall neither prejudice my converſion nor my ſalvation? and*

if

if it be not ſo with me, but I am a reprobate, then I cannot be ſaved, though I ſhould endeavour to follow your adviſe and to repent. For then Chriſt dyed not for me, nor hath procured for me, at leaſt, any effectual and ſaving grace; ſome common gifts and graces indeed I may attain, ſome illuminations, good deſires, and half repentances, which can never tranſlate me from under this ſad Decree, but only will ſerve to aggravate my future wo, while I ſhall ſin againſt the greater light and knowledge. And had I not better take my courſe then, and continue as I am, than put my ſelf upon bootleſs labour, to no purpoſe, riſing a little higher to fall the heavilier, and ſink the deeper into miſery?

Needful it is to endeavour the removal of theſe reaſonings out of thy mind, which retained will render all good adviſe to thee wholly ineffectual; and ſo

Anſw. 1. *I might ſay with* Luther. Iſtæ voces ſunt ſceleratæ, ſi prædeſtinatus ſum ſive bene, ſive malè egero ſalvabor, &c. *thoſe are wicked ſayings. If I be pradeſtinate, live I how I will I ſhall be ſaved, they tend to harden thy heart in thy ſin, while it is called*

Fabrit. Lac. Com. ex oper. Luth. claſ. 2. p 93, 94.

led to day; whereas the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, *Heb.* 3.7, 8, 15.

2. *They that maintain thoſe premiſes as true, yet approve not thy inferences; either therefore thou inferreſt groundleſly, or elſe the premiſes themſelves be very faulty, that will bear ſuch inferences as the owners of the premiſes be almoſt all aſhamed of. Sure, as no lye is of the truth, ſo that cannot be ſound doctrine that will ſupport ſhameful and vitious inferences.*

3. *Thy conceptions of the buſineſs of election to life are evidently groſs miſtakes, while thou ſuppoſeſt that any ſuch as thou art may poſſibly be of God's Elect in their preſent unconverted ſtate; for the Elect in Scripture language have ſuch characters and deſcriptions as agree not to thee or to any unconverted ſinful livers. For to inſtance, they are ſuch as,*

1. *Cry night and day to God,* Luc. 18.7. *ſo as neither thou, nor any ſuch as thou doth.*

2. *They can ſcarcely (if poſſibly) be deceived by the moſt ſubtle ſeducers,* Mat. 24. 24. *but thou (and all unconverted ſinners) are actually under the power of the deceits of ſin and Satan, and any of the Libertines that*

that would intice thee to ſin, ſaying, it cannot hinder thee of ſalvation, may ſoon deceive thee, being in ſuch principles already ſnared.

3. *The Elect are ſuch as none can lay any thing to the charge of, or condemn, being juſtified of God, and Chriſt's death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion, being prevalent with God to preſent them acceptable to him,* Rom. 8. 33, 34. *which is the priviledge of ſuch as are in Chriſt Jeſus, not walking after the fleſh (as thou and unregenerate ſinners do) but after the ſpirit, and not of any walking after the fleſh,* Rom. 8. 1, 13, 14. *for God doth, and men with his allowance may lay ſin to the charge of ſuch, and ſo to thee, and condemn both thee and them.* For he that believeth not in the Name of the Son of God is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed on him, *Joh.* 3. 18, 19. *Yea, and*

4. *The Election hath obtained (namely, to righteouſneſs) when others are hardned or blinded,* Rom. 11. 7. *with* 9. 30, 31. *but thou, and all unconverted impenitent ſinners, are ſhort of righteouſneſs, and have not obtained it.*

5. The

5. *The Elect and Choſen to ſalvation, are choſen to it (in or) through the ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, ſaith* 2 Theſſ. 2. 13. *and (in or) by the ſanctification of the Spirit to obedience, and ſprinkling of the bloud of Jeſus Chriſt, ſaith* 1 Pet. 1. 2. *But thou that art an unconverted ſinner art a ſtranger to all thoſe things, being not ſanctified in thy ſpirit by God's Spirit, but an unbeliever of, and diſobedient to the truth, and therefore alſo unſprinkled in thy mind and conſcience with the precious blood of Chriſt. Theſe things ſhew that thy ſuppoſition of being poſſibly one of the elect, is very groundleſs, nor yet do I conclude thee a reprobate, and one that mayſt not in repenting be ſaved; for though no ungodly one can be called an Elect one, yet for ungodly ones Chriſt hath dyed,* Rom. 5. 6. *and God calls ſuch to repentance, and ſuch repenting have been ſaved,* Iſa. 55. 7. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.

4. *I might adde with* Luther. Deus huic curioſitati occurrit, dicens. Ego tibi prædeſtinationem egregiè manifeſtabo, *&c.* God meets with thy curioſity, ſaying, I will excellently manifeſt to thee the myſtery of my Election, but not in that way of reaſon and fleſhly wiſ-

wisdom which thou imagineſt; but thus I will do, of a God unrevealed, I will become a God revealed, and yet I will abide the ſame God ſtill, I will be incarnate, I will ſend my Son, who ſhall dye for thy ſins, and riſe again, and ſo I will fullfil thy deſire. Lo! this is my beloved Son, hear him; behold him lying in the Manger, or in his Mothers Lap, and hanging on the Croſſe; mind what he hath done and ſaid, there thou mayſt behold me, if thou heareſt and loveſt him, then thou art predeſtinate to life; other ways of reaſon ſlay thou, becauſe God deteſts them. Let this be thy buſineſs to receive the Son of God, let him be pleaſing in thy heart, in his Nativity, Miracles, and Croſſe, for there is the Book of Life in which mens names be written. *Thus* Luther *excellently on* Gen. 26. *To which let me adde,*

5. *It is good for us to know the truth as it is in Jeſus, and there we may rightly diſcern Election and Reprobation, both in Decree and Execution, the eternal purpoſe and grace given us in Chriſt before the agey*[1] *times* πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, *being now made manifeſt by the coming of Chriſt,* &c, 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. *and ſo certain it is,*

1. *That*

1. *That God of mere favour and grace choſe the ſeed of* Abraham, *of* Iſaac, *of* Jacob, *of* David, *even* Jeſus *of* Nazareth *made of their ſeed according to the fleſh to be the Saviour of the world, and the heir and inheritor (even in the manhood) of all the fulneſs of the grace, ſpirit, bleſſing, and glory of God, ſo as by him, and him only they may be communicated to others alſo, and in all this to be the ſeed in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed, ſee* Iſa. 42. 1. Gal. 3. 16, 17. 1 Pet. 2 4.

2. *With reſpect to* Chriſt *he choſe* Abraham *and his ſeed after him, to excellent honour and priviledges above all other people, yet not all his ſeed, nor any merely upon that account, but him in whom his ſeed even* Chriſt *ſhould be called, that is,* Iſaac, *Gen.* 21. 12. *Rom.* 9. 7. *whereas* Iſhmaell *alſo was his ſeed after the fleſh. And of* Iſaac, *before his two children were born, or had done any good or evil (that his purpoſe of Election might ſtand not of works, but of him that calleth) he choſe* Jacob *to be the progenitor of* Chriſt, *and to have the choiſe knowledge of God and his Oracles depoſited with him, and he took or adopted all his children to be brought up*

as

as his houſhold-ſervants or children under the nurture and inſtruction of the ſame, and ſo to have the preheminence therein, even above Eſau *and his poſterity, whom he deſtinated Nationally to be ſervants to them, ſee* Gen. 25. 23. Mal 1. 1, 2. (*which as it is an act of leſs love, may be called hatred, as leſs love is in the Scripture ſo called,* Gen. 29. 30, 31. Luc. 14. 26. *though it is not ſaid* He hated Eſau, *till it's ſaid too,* and he laid waſte his Mountains; *not before the two children were born, but in* Malachies *time,* Mal. 1. 2. *with* Rom. 9. 13.) *yet ſo as the bleſſing in* Jacob's *ſeed (that is,* Chriſt) *ſhould be for all the Nations or Families of the earth,* Gen. 28. 13. *out of which number* Eſaus *could not be excluded, in ſubmitting to and ſerving him; but the honour to have the bleſſing to ſpring out of his ſeed, and ſo that ſalvation ſhould be of them, and they to be as his children or houſhold-ſervants, a people near to him in reſpect of whom others were to be as Subjects and Servants at a greater diſtance) this belonged to* Iſrael *alone,* Pſal. 147. 19, 20. *and* 148. 14. *yet in this he bound not his own hands, but that in caſe theſe his adopted children or houſhould ſervants rebelled againſt*

gainſt him, and would neither by mercies and lenity, nor by his threatnings and puniſhments be reclaimed, he might harden and give them up, yea, and cut them off and deſtroy them as any of the other Nations about them, and call in others into their places as he pleaſed. Even as Solomon *(ſuppoſe) choſe himſef houſhold-ſervants who had great priviledges, ſo as to be pronounced happy in them, becauſe they might ſtand before him and bear his wiſdome, ſo as his remote ſubjects could not (though he was good and juſt to them alſo) yet he was at liberty for all that choiſe, to caſt off or put to death any of thoſe his ſervants as well as others, in caſe they lifting up themſelves in pride ſhould rebel againſt him, and might have taken out of his remoter ſubjects whom he had pleaſed, the diſpoſe of honours being not of any of the ſervants, however forward or obedient, but of himſelf the Lord; though to ſuch as were ready to obey he would be ready to give good honours and rewards as he ſaw fitting. So was the caſe here, as the propoſals of his choice honours by him (of whom the diſpoſe is even him that ſhews mercy, and not of any that wills or runs for them*

upon

upon condition of their obedience to be continued to them, and his threatnings of destruction otherwise, and to call in and honor those that were not a people into their place, evince, see Exod. 19. 5, 6. Deut. 7. 10, 11, 12. and 8. 19, 20. and 28. 1, 13, 43, 44. and 32, 21. *with* Rom. 10. 19. *though yet out of love to their Fathers he ingaged that he would not utterly cast away all their seed, but reserve a remnant always, with whom he would take pains, as it were, further, and use means still to reclaim them to obedience, and being made obedient, receive them into favour again see for this* Jer. 30, 11. *and* 46. 28. Zech. 13. 8, 9. *with* Rom. 11. 28. *and in all this he exercised, and still exerciseth such power over men, as a* Potter *over his clay, framing them in his providential government one to honour, and another to dishonour, executing wrath also on one when fitted to destruction, and shewing mercy and long-suffering to another, and so having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardning in their sins and rebellions whom he will, and so he hath had mercy now on us Gentiles, and framed us to honour, even the honour foregiven to* Israel (*as to many things in it*)

having

having called us into their place, and hath shewed severity to them, giving them up to hardness and blindness, and framing them to dishonour, because of their unbelief and stumbling at Christ, Rom. 9. 30, 31, 32, 33. *and* 11, 20. *though yet he hath not so rejected them, but that the Apostle still prayed for them, and endeavoured (even for such as had stumbled) that they might be saved,* Rom. 10. 1. *and* 11. 14. *telling us they have not stumbled that they might fall, and that God is able to graft them in again, and will if they continue not in unbelief; nor hath he so honoured us, but that if we continue not in his goodness we also shall be broken off,* Chap. 11. 11, 23, 24 *That's the substance of those two too much mistaken Chapters of* Rom. 9. *and* 11. *and what I have here said of them agrees with the other Scriptures.*

3. *Now in all this God still reserves the dignity of giving eternal life to Jesus Christ only, to which he hath chosen in him from before the foundations of the world, all that are, or come to be, and abide in him, through the prevailing force of his grace with them, chusing, culling, and bringing them out of the world into him, or daining, framing, and disposing their*

hearts

hearts to eternal life, and so to believe on him for it; whither they be of the Jews or Gentiles, the honoured or dishonoured vessels, 2 Tim. 2. 21. *as it is said,* "Know ye that God hath set apart for himself (*that is, to be holy and blameless before him in love, so as all the chosen into the former priviledges of the visible Church are not*) the man that is Godly, *Psal.* 4. 3. (*typified in* Isaac, *Gal.* 4. 23, 28, 31.) Eph. 1. 4. *rejecting all that refuse and disobey Christ, whither Jews or Gentiles, whither they be workers for life according to any law of works, and rejoycers in their fleshly priviledges, of whom* Ishmael *was a type,* Gal. 4. 22, 23, 24, 25. *or prophane abusers of the goodness and grace of God, typified in* Esau, *Heb.* 12. 16, 17. *and therefore it behoves thee, and all men, to come to Christ, and to his grace, wherein the Election is.* For,

4 *As salvation comes of the Jews by Gods Election, and hath in it blessing for all the families of the earth; so from that* (even *from Christ, who is Gods salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa.* 49 6.) *none in Scripture language are called Reprobate till through their willful resistances against the light, truth, and grace of God extended to them through Christ, all means used towards them becoming ineffectual, God gives them up and leaves striving with them, as*

Psal. 81. 10, 11, 12, 13. Jer. 6. 8, 8, 29, 30. Rom. 1. 21, 24, 28. 1 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12, *for Christ that blessed seed, and Gods salvation, hath dyed and therein given himself a ransome for all, and tasted death by the grace of God for every one, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9. 1 Joh. 2. 2. *And God himself, who cannot lye, hath sworn as he lives that he hath no pleasure (none neither secret nor revealed) in the death of the wicked (by his still sinning) but rather that he should turn and live; and therefore calls such (even the worst of sinners, the simple, scorners, fools that hate knowledge, and such as disobeying these his calls to the end shall perish, and he will laugh at the destruction of) saying,* Turn ye at my reproofs, behold I will pour out my spirit to you, and make known my words, *Isa.* 55. 7. Exek. 33. 11. Prov. 1. 22, 23, 24, 25. *Thence doth* Paul *the Apostle of the Gentiles tell us, that God wills that all be saved, and come to the knowledge (or acknowledgment) of the truth (which in a measure therefore at all times he was making known to and in the heathens, so as they of them also that rebelled were without excuse,* Rom. 1. 18, 19, 20, 21. *with* 2. 22, 14, 15.) *he being one God both of Jews and Gentiles, and having constituted*

one Mediator of God and Men (indefinitely) the man Jesus Christ, even him who hath given himself a ransome for all, a testimony in due (or in their proper) seasons (whence those frequent calls of all Nations & all the earth to make a joyful noise to God, serve him with gladness, enter his Courts with thankfulness, as in Psal. 66. 1 & 98 4. & 100. & 117) & Peter *the Apostle of the Circumcision tells us the same, that God is not willing that any perish, but that all should come to repentance, and therefore is patient towards us, and his long-suffering is to be accounted salvation, as he saith* Paul *also writes (as indeed he doth in* Rom. 2. 4, 5.) *in whose writings he saith are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable (namely in the mystery of Christ) wrest to their own destruction,* 2 Pet. 3 9, 15, 16. *now what might those things more likely be, then those in which he seems to the unskillful to say that God would have some to perish, and that his long-suffering is out of a purpose to destroy them? which thou that pleadest so, as before is said, and such as thou art evidently wrest by your inferences to your destruction? Better it is to believe the plain sayings of those holy men,*

which

which they have delivered as the ſum of the doctrine committed to them to be declared by them in all the world (as the Apoſtle Paul *expreſly ſays of thoſe paſſages above recited in* 1 Tim. 2. 4, 5, 6. *that they are the teſtimony whereunto he was ordained an Herald or Preacher, and an Apoſtle, a Teacher of the Gentiles (not in equivocation and deceit, for verily God ſent not his ſervants into the world to deceive men with lies, but in faith and verity,* ver. 7 *) judging thoſe underſtandings of, or inferences and doctrines from any other ſayings of Scripture about abſtruſer things, that claſh with thoſe plain ſayings to be miſtakes, than to lean to ſuch underſtandings or inferences againſt them. Mind alſo what our Saviour replyed to one that asked him, if there were but few that ſhould be ſaved, and obey his counſel thereupon, bidding him to ſtrive to enter the ſtrait gate before it was ſhut, as the next verſe implies,* Luc. 13. 24, 25. *He taught him not to believe according to thy reaſonings that either he muſt be pulled in, ſtrive he never ſo much againſt it, or elſe there was no admittance for him, but all his ſtrivings to enter would be loſt labour to him. Our Saviour calls all the ends of the earth to look up to him, and be ſaved, he being*

being a juſt God, and a Saviour that hath not ſaid to the houſe of Iſrael (*and by conſequence to no body elſe*) *that they ſhould ſeek his face in vain; but he ſpeaks in righteouſneſs, and declares right things,* Iſa. 45. 19, 21, 22. *whoſoever comes to him, he ſaith, he will in no wiſe caſt them out, he coming down from heaven to do his Fathers will, and that is, that every one that ſeeth (or beholds) the Son, and believes in him ſhould have everlaſting life,* Joh. 6. 37, 38, 40. Ask therefore, and thou ſhalt receive; ſeek, and thou ſhalt find; knock, and it ſhall be opened to thee, *for (he ſaith not ſome only that are elected to it, but)* every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeks, finds; and and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened, *Mat* 7. 7, 8. *ceaſe thy reaſonings then, and inſtead thereof*; Incline thine ear, and come unto Chriſt; hear, and thy ſoul ſhall live, *Iſa.* 55. 2, 3. *Aſſure thy ſelf God is no reſpecter of perſons, if thou hearing conſent and obey, thou ſhalt eat the good things of the promiſed inheritance; but if thou perſiſt in thy diſobedience thou ſhalt be deſtroyed, for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it,* Iſa. 1. 19, 20. *and let this ſuffice to thoſe thy reaſonings.*

But,

2. *If thou adde and ſay, ſome that believe the Doctrine I herein preach, take liberty therefrom to ſin, and may as well as from the other principles; for if Chriſt dyed for all, then muſt all be eternally ſaved, and having liberty to turn to Chriſt, when they will, given them through Chriſt, they may be bold to ſin ſtill, till they pleaſe to turn. I ſay breifly,*

1. *That men may, and will take liberty too often to ſin, where none is given them, many do abuſe Gods goodneſs and truth to their own deſtruction, and yet his truth and goodneſs are blameleſs therein, for its uſually by believing ſome lye which they adde to his truth, and for which he will reprove them,* Prov. 30.6. *and ſo thou here addeſt falſhoods to his truth. For,*

2. *Neither do the Scriptures nor I, nor any that hold cloſely to them teach thee, that all that Chriſt dyed for, muſt and ſhall therefore be ſaved eternally; but on the contrary they ſay, that ſome deny the Lord that bought them (a. thou doſt while thou denieſt to believe in, and live to him) and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction,* 2 Pet. 2.1. *and that thoſe that Chriſt dyed for may ſtumble and turn from him, and in ſo doing may be deſtroyed and periſh,*

Rom.

Rom. 14. 15. 1 Cor. 8. 11. *and upon that account they warn believers to take heed of offending their weak brethren. Christ having dyed for all that they that live might live to him, will therefore adjudge to a terrible destruction, such as refuse to live to him, chusing to live to themselves and to their sins,* 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11, 14, 15.

3. *Nor do they assert that any man that refuses to turn at Christs calls at the present, have liberty given them by him to turn when they will; every obstinate holding fast of sin, and refusing to turn when he gives liberty in his calls by his grace (without which, and further than that effects it, none have any liberty at all to any thing that is spiritually good) forfeits the liberty given, and God may (should he be severe to take the forfeiture as sometimes he doth) upon that account withdraw it, and swear in his wrath, that men not entring his rest, when by his grace they might, they shall not enter it afterward if they would,* Num. 14. 22, 23, 40, 41, 42. *and that making excuses when he calls them, and they might come, they shall not afterward taste of his Supper to which he call'd them,* Luc. 14. 18, 19, 24. *Every act of willful sinning hardens the heart and grieves Gods*

spirit,

ſpirit, and provokes him to depart, and ceaſe ſtriving with, or drawing a man, and if God ceaſe drawing no man can come to Chriſt without his drawing. Therefore take heed of provoking him thereto by ſuch thy murmurings, Joh. 6. 43, 44. Yet a little while the light is with thee, walk while thou haſt the light leaſt darkneſs come upon thee, *and then thou walk thou knoweſt not whither,* Joh. 12. 35. *no man hath power over the ſpirit, either his own to live as long as he liſt, or Gods that it ſhall work with him as long as he pleaſe, cloſe with him therefore while its yet a day of ſalvation,* Eccleſ. 8. 8. 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2.

One thing more I have to warn thee of, and I ſhall conclude, namely, that thou abuſe not any paſſage in this following Treatiſe about Gods goodneſs to great ſinners, or ſuddain receiving or comforting any ſuch upon their repentance; either to incourage thee to ſin, or to harbour unſoundneſs in thy repentings. Its only they that truly and unfeignedly repent that find God ſo gracious, which as he hath not promiſed to any man preſuming to ſin, ſo they that are unſound therein, neither ſooner nor latter find acceptance. The Prodigal in the Parable did not only ſee, and ſay it

was

was good for him to arise, and go to his Father, or better than to lye there and to pine and perish, and yet lye there still; nor did he only rise up and step a step or two, and turn back again, for so his Father had never espyed him, so as to run, and meet, and imbrace him; but he resolved, and arose, and went; purposed it seriously, and performed it really; and then he presently found hearty welcome, go thou and do likewise. Its not bare convincements, faint wishes, good desires, or half repentances, but in the minding Gods grace, a serious and thorough arising up from sin, and returning to God in Christ that finds acceptance.

The occasion of my penning this discourse was mainly what befell a woman in our Town of Lin, *who sinning against much light and grace from God, was by his just and severe judgement left so to sin, and her sin so brought to light, as brought her to a shameful death; who, though God would not spare her from such a death here, to warn others not to sin, yet seemed to have found such mercy with God, as gave her much comfort at her end. I thought to have inserted the Relation of her, but forbear at presens, least I should occasion too*

much

much sorrow to, if not anger also in her relations. Perhaps, I may publish something hereafter, if I judge it convenient, in the inte[illegible] peruse and make good use of what I have here done, and God give his blessing with it. To whom committing thee, and it, and my self, and begging thy prayers for me, if thou hast any acquaintance with him. I rest,

Thine in what I am able

for thy helpfulness,

Lin, May 16.
1668.

Jo. Horne.

A

A Gracious

REPROOF

TO

PHARASAICAL SAINTS,

Murmuring at God's Mercies

TO

PENITENT SINNERS.

Luke 15. 31, 32.

But he ſaid unto him, Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad. For this thy Brother was dead, and is a live again; was loſt, and is found.

CHAP. I.

The Preface paraphrasing the Parables of the lost Sheep, and lost Groat, with the occasion of them.

IT is a hard thing for men to know or think themselves righteous, yea, though but comparatively better than some of their Neighbours, and not be proud of it; and when men are proud of themselves, they are very prone to disdain others, whom they think not so good as themselves. Yea, and when they see God, or his Servants, preferring such upon any account, or in any way of testimony thereof before; nay, if but equalising them with themselves, they are apt to envy and fret against those persons therefore: yea, and to fault such Servants of God that so do, and sometimes to contend against God himself. For such is the nature of Pride, that it lifts

lifts up it ſelf above all, and apts to be angry at, and offended with, what or whoſoever oppoſeth it. All which obſervations we may make from, and find verified in the Phariſees; who thinking themſelves (though falſly) righteous, diſdained at ſinners, and murmured at Chriſt (himſelf the prime ſervant of God, yea, God himſelf) becauſe of his gentleneſs and goodneſs towards ſinners. So when *Matthew*, otherwiſe called *Levi*, a Publican, being himſelf converted, made a feaſt for Chriſt and his Diſciples, and invited many Publicans and ſinners to come and eat with him: Chriſt not refuſing their company thereat, but laying hold of that occaſion, to become their good Phyſitian, for curing thoſe ſpiritual diſeaſes, which threatned their deſtruction, the Pharaſees were offended at him, *Mat.* 9. 10, 11. *Mar.* 2. 14. 15, 16. *Luk.* 5. 27, 28, 29, 30. And ſo was *Simon* the Pharaſee, becauſe he ſuffered a ſinful woman to come ſo near him, as to waſh, and wipe, and kiſs his feet, as he ſat at Dinner with him, *Luk.* 7. 37, 38, 39. And the like temper we find to have been in them here, in what is ſaid of them

in the two firſt verſes of this *Luk.* 15. for after Chriſt had informed his Diſciples of what they muſt look to part with and forgo, that will be indeed his Diſciples, and how dangerous it is for thoſe that have begun to follow him, and therein to partake of his vertues, to prove Apoſtates and Backſliders, *Chap.* 14, 25, 34. yet it follows *ver.* 1. of this Chapter. *Then reſorted to him all the Publicans and Sinners to hear him.* As if notwithſtanding all he had told them (as that they who will be his Diſciples muſt, in a ſenſe, hate their deareſt relations and enjoyments, yea their very lives, forſaking all for his ſake, if he call them to it; and that ſuch as forſake him after they have partook of any thing of his vertues are as ſalt that hath loſt its ſavour, good for nothing, the vileſt of men.) Yet then, for all this, *ver.* 2. *All the Publicans and Sinners drew nigh to hear him, and the Phariſees and Scribes murmured, ſaying, This man receiveth ſinners, and eateth with them.* By ſinners meaning ſuch as were notoriouſly ſuch, ſuch, as if called Brethren, as making profeſſion of religion with us, we may not afterward eat with,

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* 5. 11. till they repent them. It ſeems with ſuch Chriſt eat, being not profeſſedly his Diſciples as yet; and while they were ſuch ſinners; and therein teſtified more civility, or familiarity towards them, then the Phariſees in their ſtricter way of Religion could well like of: and therefore they murmured againſt him. But he for vindicating his own charitable demeanor towards thoſe Sinners, ſpake a Parable to them; yea, three Parables, which take up all the reſt of the Chapter. The firſt is, of a man having an hundred Sheep, and loſing one of them; which the more effectually to ſilence their murmuring, he would have any one of them to make it his own caſe, *ver.* 3.4,5,6. *And he ſpake unto them this Parable, ſaying, What man of you having an hundred ſheep, if he loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninty, and nine in the Wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he findes it; and when he hath found it he layeth it upon his ſhoulders, rejoycing: and when he is come home, he calls together his friends, and neighbours, ſaying, Rejoyce with me, for I have found my Sheep that was loſt.* His defence is very juſt and pregnant, for what's a Sheep to a Soul?

yea, what's one Sheep of an hundred to many ſinful men and women, perhaps almoſt an hundred for one? and if they could not content themſelves with their ninety and nine Sheep ſafe, when but one was miſſing, but that leaving the ninety and nine in the Wilderneſs where they alſo might meet with danger, they would undertake the care and labour of ſeeking one ſilly Sheep, and ſeek while they finde it, and not be weary with ſeeking it: yea, and would bear the burthen of its weight in bringing it home when found, that they ſo might bring it the ſafelier home, and would make ſuch mirth with coſt for it when its brought home, as to invite their Friends and Neighbours to make merry with them for it: What reaſon had they to be angry at his Charity to the precious Souls of a multitude, every one of which is of a greater value then all their flock of Sheep, an hundred times multiplied? when as alſo his fetching them up expoſes not others to any hazzard of their being wronged or loſt in the interim, whatever pains, labour, or coſt it might put upon him to ſeek them up, or what

ever

ever burthen to ſuſtain and bring them home, when found by him? when as too, though they were cauſleſly offended, yet thoſe who were far their betters, and before them in hatred of ſin, and love of holineſs, were highly pleaſed. For applying the Parable, he addes, *Verſe 7. I ſay unto you, that even ſo there will be joy in heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, more then over ninety and nine juſt perſons who need no repentance.* Not that heaven is not glad for juſt perſons keeping their way, and not offending, ſo as to loſe themſelves; but as their Charity in a ſort leads them to be ſorry for the evil and danger a ſinner brings himſelf into: ſo anſwerable to that ſorrow for that, is their joy the greater when that danger is over, and the object of their Charity hath eſcaped or recovered it: Even as a loving Father, or indulgent Mother having many Children, is more exerciſed for one of them when ſick, and in danger to dye, or to be loſt: and anſwerably is more glad when that danger is eſcaped then for all the reſt about whom they were not ſo exerciſed. And if there be ſuch joy in heaven for one ſinner that re-

penteth, ſure then it is a good work to ſeek and endeavour their repentance. And what is it ſeads any here on earth then to hinder, yea, or grudge at any good endeavour to that purpoſe; or the chearful entertainment of ſuch in their converting into fellowſhip with them? it cannot be their holineſs, or hatred of ſin; for that is found more abundantly in heaven then in any here: therefore it muſt be their Ignorance, Pride, or Uncharitableneſs, *&c.*

2. The ſecond Parable is of a Woman having ten pieces of Silver, and loſing one, *ver.* 8. *Or what Woman having ten pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one of them, lighteth not a candle, and ſweeps the houſe, and ſeeks diligently till ſhe findes it*: ver. 9. *And finding it, ſhe calls together her friends and neighbours, ſaying, Rejoyce with me, for I have found the piece that I had loſt.* But why doth our Saviour bring this ſimilitude or parable from the cuſtom of their women? I ſuppoſe his oppoſers, and ſuch as murmured at his gracious carriage towards ſinners were of both Sexes: for ſo we finde the Apoſtles afterward met with oppoſers,

and

and perſecutors from amongſt both upon the like account. In *Acts* 13. 50. we finde that when the Apoſtles, *Paul* and *Barnabas* had preached to the Gentiles the Grace of God (and the Gentiles were as loathſome to the Jews as the Publicans and Harlots to the Phariſees) *The Jews ſtirred up devout and honourable women* (or as Dr. *Hammond* reads it, worſhipping women of good quality) *and the chief men of the City, and raiſed perſecution againſt them, and expelled them out of their Coaſts.* Devout or worſhipping women, ſuch as were zealous of the Law, and of the Traditions of the Elders, and old Cuſtomes of their Fore-fathers: Theſe ſeeing *Paul* and *Barnabas* like Mechanicks (labouring often with their own hands) and not of their licenſed Preachers, Rabbies, and Doctors, and preaching Doctrine alſo differing from what ſuch taught, and derogating from their Jewiſh Superſtitions and Cuſtoms, and extending the mercy of God to the Gentiles, they were eaſily ſtirred up in the firſt place, and likely were Inſtruments of ſtirring up the chief men of the City to raiſe perſecution againſt them. Wo-

men are usually full of affection, and passion, and if acted, and ordered by Principles of Truth, and by right Judgment, are very useful helpers forward of Christs Cause, and Doctrine: As we read of divers that were helpers with the Apostles; but if byassed by corrupt Judgment and Affection, if superstitiously and ignorantly zealous, they are as fit as any to raise up mischief. And its likely our Lord had some murmurings at him from that Sex also; and therefore in this Parable he meets with them, appealing to them, that if they or any of them having but ten Groats, or pieces of Silver (in the Greek, *Drachma*, or a Dram, after one account in value * about 7d. ob. after †another about a shilling, or something better, in our Coin) lose one of them, whether they (if they be good Housewifes especially, and mindful of worldly livelihood) would not light a Candle and sweep the House, and look into every corner of it diligently, to finde it again, not contenting themselves that they have nine of those pieces still beside

* *Attick.* †*Ægineap.* 1s. ob.

ſide in their purſe, not giving over ſeeking it while they have hope to finde it; and if they finde it, though it ſhould be in the ſink, or in the dirt, they will ſcarce cry faugh, it ſtinks, and throw it quite away, but rather wiping, or waſhing it clean, put it again in their purſe; and calling their Friends and Neighbors about them, wiſh them to be glad with them, for they have found what was loſt. And yet they would not have our Lord and his Servants value a ſoul ſo much as they do a ſix pence or a ſhilling; ſo as to uſe all means (as by bringing the light of the word, and thereby diſcovering and removing their evil doings) to ſeek it up and ſave it, and chear and comfort it, or rejoyce over it when found, and recovered. Oh what pitteous Creatures are we, both men and women, that value ſuch ſmall things better then the ſouls of ſinners! And ſure if a woman would do thus for a ſixpence, what would ſhe not do for ſix-pound, or any greater ſumme? And is not a poor ſinful ſoul (much more many) far more to be prized? ſurely yes, and had they wiſdom to their affection,

they would do ſo too, for their Superiours and betters do ſo: Our Saviour adding, *Verſe* 10. *So, I ſay unto you, there is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.*

3. The third and laſt parable is this, of a part whereof I have choſen to treat, *Verſe* 11. *A certain man had two ſons.* Men will not willingly loſe one ſheep of an hundred if they can by ſeeking for it finde it, nor a woman one piece of Silver out of ten. What would any man or woman (for the Greek word Ἄνθρωπος here, is of both Genders, or Sexes, and extends to either man or woman, though carried on after in the Maſculine, with reference to, and for the fitter reſemblance of God) but what I ſay would any man or woman do think you, if having but two Sons they ſhould loſe one of them? would they not more induſtriouſly ſeek him, and finding him again, would they not be much more glad for him, though they have another beſide, then for a Sheep; and, then a woman, though never ſo great a Houſewife for a ſix pence? Such the ſcope of this third Parable, in which our Lord

ſhews

ſhews his and his Fathers fatherly affection to mankinde as made by him and *as his Off-ſpring* (as the Poet ſaith) deſcended of him; and much more to ſuch as are his by Adoption and ſpecial grace of Regeneration, by and through Jeſus Chriſt, The fruit of the travel of his Soul, and the iſſue of his Word and Spirit vouchſafed to, and working in and upon them. And ſo he ſaith (and I ſhall à little paraphraſe on it.)

CHAP. II.

The Parable of the Prodigal Paraphraſed to the Text.

A *Certain man had two Sons*, thats but a few, the ſmalleſt number that can be; but by how much the fewer, the loather would the Father be to loſe one of them. *Ver.* 2. *And the younger of them ſaid to his Father, give me the portion of Goods that falleth to me*; ſhewing that the beginning of mans departure from God, is his not liking to live upon God and Chriſt by Faith in him, but deſiring

ſiring to have his portion in himſelf, in his own hand, diſpoſe, and keeping, that he might be a Lord in himſelf (*Jer.*2.31.) and live apart from God in his own ſufficiency of Wiſdom, Power, Underſtanding, *&c. And he divided unto them his living*; ſignifying the readineſs of God to diſtribute to men his gifts and benefits, as pleaſes him. *Verſe* 13. *And not many dayes after the younger Son gathered all together* (either as arrogating to himſelf what he had received of God, or taking a view of, and contemplating his riches received from God, ſo as to eſtimate himſelf accordingly (the Spring of Spiritual pride) and ſubjecting them to his own will) *And he took his journey into a far Countrey* (went away and departed in heart and life from his dependance on, and obedience to the Lord, and from cloſe cleaving to him for counſel, protection, direction, and bleſſing) *and he there* (in the world or ſtate of Apoſtacy from God) *waſted* (ſpent or ſcattered) *his ſubſtance* (whatever ſubſtantial gift or grace he had received of God) *with riotous living*, living careleſly, and ſpending Gods Gifts on his own luſts and pleaſures,

ſures. *Verſe* 14. *And when he had ſpent all* (as a man may ſoon ſpend and loſe all in being departed from God, who ſhould and would continually ſupply him in depending on him, and being guided by him) *there aroſe* (*or was*) *a mighty famine in that Land*, a great want and ſpiritual emptineſs to the ſoul from the world, in that its departed and ſeparated ſtate from God; there being nothing in the Idols to which the ſoul is gone out, but emptineſs and miſery.) *And he began to be in want* (to be ſenſible of the loſs of ſatisfaction he was wont to receive from God, and had in his gifts; and of the emptineſs of his ſoul in their abſence or loſs. *Verſe* 15. *And he went* (yet further from God inſtead of repenting and turning back to him) *and* (*faſtned*) *joyned himſelf to a Citizen of that Country.* (Such the folly of the heart of man departed from God, that under the ſenſe of its loſs and want it rather goes further from him, and layes about more earneſtly for, and ſticks more cloſely to ſome creature comfort, Idol, yea, or to the Devil and his counſel, thinking to finde help there, then looks back to

God.

God. So long as it can hope to finde help or life out of him any where else, it comes not to him.) *And he sent him into the fields to feed swine.* (Such is the base drudgery work of sin and the Devil, that he employes the soul in; an employment far below a Princes Son: and yet so foolish be the disobedient departed sons of God, that they rather submit to any base servile drudgery, where they hope to finde, though never so poor a subsistence, rather then repent and go back to God. See this in other phrases, *Isa.* 30. 1, 2, 15, 16. *Hosea* 5. 13, 14. *Jeremiah* 2. 13. and many other places. *Verse* 16. *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the Swine did eat of, but no man gave unto him.* Such the baseness of the revolted lost Soul, that it could be content to subsist or finde its life and pleasure in the vilest things rather then to return to God, and to the things above, that he hath prepared in Christ for us. Such the emptiness and vileness of all worldly enjoyments, that they be fitly resembled to husks, Swines meat, rather then Mans: And such the merciful providence of God toward his

his ſtrayed children, as oft-times not to ſuffer them to finde ſatisfaction or ſupplies from any thing they ſinfully ſeek it in; for this was the way to cure him, as mad men, and men diſtracted ſometimes are by being kept faſting, and hunger bit. And ſuch was he now as follows, when its ſaid, *Verſe* 17. *And when he came to himſelf*, [Men are drunk with Sathans deluſions, ſins deceits, or the worlds luſhious fulneſs, while they can finde therein what to feed themſelves on, or are mad men, while without ſenſe of their ſin and miſery, and without mindefulneſs of God: But God often by afflictions and croſſes recalls them, and brings them again to their Sences, to ſee what they have done, and whitherto they be brought, and what courſe they ſhould now take; as its added.] *He ſaid, How many hired Servants of my Fathers have bread enough, and to ſpare; and I periſh with hunger?* The beginning of Converſion is when the Sinner is made ſenſible of his miſery, and ſees and beholds alſo Gods goodneſs and ſufficiency to relieve and help him; remembers whence he is fallen, and what

rela-

relation God ſtands in toward him in his Son: there is the beginning of his quickning and reviving again. God is good to hired Servants; thoſe that walk in his wayes, and do his work only with eye to themſelves and their own advantages thereby, and have not been begotten to him through the immortal ſeed of the word, the grace in his Son diſcovered to, and received by them. But how much more to ſuch as being begotten to him by his love, do in love to him depend on, and ſerve him. Thence he reſolves, *Verſe* 19. *I will ariſe.* [Sin overthrows the ſinner, and makes him ly groveling and groaning under its burthen and preſſure when diſcerned: but grace perceived and called to remembrance, quickens, and gives motion, ſtrength, and reſolution to ariſe from the practice of it, and from pining away in the ſenſe of it] *and I will go to my Father* [Go no more after Idols, *Hoſea* 14.8. that afford no comfort or profit, but to him whoſe love at firſt begat hope, as well as at firſt his hands did make me] *And I will ſay to him, Father I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee.* [A reſo-

reſolution to confeſs his ſins againſt God and man, againſt Chriſt the heavenly one, againſt the Holy Spirit that is from Heaven, and againſt the Word that is from Heaven too, and againſt the Angels in Heaven, whoſe Service and Miniſtry is abuſed in our ſin.] *And before thee*, that is, in the ſight of, and ſo againſt God himſelf in all this, and in all other his mercies abuſed: All which confeſſion ſprings from hope in God, whence he challenges him for his Father, though offended by him; but yet addes, as humbling himſelf before him, and ſubmitting himſelf to him and his Diſpoſe. *Verſe 19. I am no more worthy to be called thy Son*; [as if he ſhould ſay, though I am by Creation, and by thy former gracious Call, Adoption, and Regeneration, thy Son; yet I have forfeited that relation, as to thy owning me ſo any longer, and giving me the title and priviledges of a Son, I have ſo defaced thy Image, and likeneſſe in me by my ſin, and ſo diſobliged thee by my diſobedience] *Make me as one of thy hired Servants.* [Give me but a room in thy houſe, and let me have but their portion,

portion, who ſerving thee for themſelves only, and thy reward are under thy maintenance and protection; a ſpeech in which he judges himſelf, and ſubmits himſelf to any mean condition: So his Father would but take him into his houſe again, though to be under the ſervitude of the Law, rather then to be left ſtill to be a drudge to Sin and Satan. Thus Sinners come home by weeping croſs, forfeiting their priviledges, honour, favour, and dignities, by their tranſgreſſions: but all this while here is only repentance reſolved on, the practice of it muſt follow the reſolution: And ſo it was. *Verſe* 20. *And he aroſe and came to his Father*; there's the practice of repentance: the ariſing from ſin, and from the diſcouragements under the conſideration of ſin, to return and come by Faith, Hope, and the deſire of heart to God to ſeek after him, and ſubmit to him, as he diſcovers himſelf to us in and by Chriſt. And now ſee the mercy of God to penitent Sinners painted out in the compaſſions of a tender hearted Father to his Prodigal, but repenting and returning Son; for it

fol-

follows, *But when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him.* Oh how quick ſighted is Love and Charity of what is good, fatherly love, to a returning loſt Childe; the love of God to truly penitent Sinners? While the Sinner is yet ſhort in his Repentance, and a great way off from coming up to God in conformity to what his word requires; yet he being really in the way thereto, ſeriouſly deſirous of, and endeavouring after it. God ſees, he takes notice, pittieth his miſery, and is ready to encourage and animate him in his Repentance. The Son goes towards his Father, as being between hope and fear of acceptance with him; but the Father runs towards his Son, as it were to haſten his endeavours, or prevent them with encouragement to more aſſured confidence of welcome therein: yea, and before the Son can fall at his Fathers feet with tears of Repentance, the Father falls on his neck, and kiſſes him with kiſſes of his welcome; the kiſſes of his mouth, the ſweet encouragements of his Word

and

and Spirit, which hinder not, but quicken the Sons repentant Confeſſion, and humbling of himſelf to him. *Verſe* 21. *And the Son ſaid to him, Father* [now he may call him ſo with more boldneſs, as having found before-hand ſuch renewed teſtimonies of his former kindeneſs and tender mercies] *I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* [The ſenſe of Gods love and mercy quickens confeſſion of ſin, and ſelf-abaſement in the ſight of our vileneſs, *Ezek.* 16. 60, 61. Nothing humbles and melts ſo much as Gods love, preventing and following us, being notwithſtanding our unworthineſs, ſtreamed forth to us, and perceived by us: But before the Son can ſay as he pre-reſolved, *Make me as one of thy hired Servants*, his Father prevents him as follows. *Verſe* 22. But (notwithſtanding the Son had ſo ſinned, and judged himſelf unworthy to be any more called his Son) *the Father* (forgiving all paſt, and glad of his loſt Sons return) *ſaid unto his Servants, Bring forth the beſt robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and ſhooes on his feet.*)

He

[He finds his Son in a poor tattered caſe, in a ragged condition, cloathed with vile Apparel, or in a manner wholly naked, like a Swineheard, far unlike what became his Son; ſo ſin makes us: and he diſlikes it, and pitties it. And now the Servants muſt apply themſelves too to recruit and comfort him: and ſuch the gladneſs of a loving Father to have his loſt Son again; that forgetting all his offences, and not ſo much as once upbraiding him, inſtead of ſhutting his doors againſt him, or calling for Rods and Staves to beat and correct him, he calls for the beſt Robe, with Ring and Shooes to adorn him; which the Servants muſt apply to him, and put upon him too, as thinking nothing too good for him to be afforded him. He will have him clad, and waited on as his Son again, to ſignifie, as what ſin continued in, deprives us of, ſo alſo how acceptable it is to God, that his Servants, and Goſpel Miniſters make it their buſineſs to incourage, comfort, and reſtore penitent Sinners: Yea, he addes further, *Verſe* 23. *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.*

The

The poor ſinning Childe was hungry as well as ragged, ready to Famiſh; and his Father knows his needs, and will ſupply them with what may beſt ſhew his love and gladneſs for his return. When he was keeping Swine, Bread and Cheeſe would have been welcome, might he have had them; yea, now being returned, he would have been glad and accepted it, might he have had ordinary fare, and Servants entertainment: in his hunger he mentioned only bread enough in his Fathers houſe; but that ſuffices not his Fathers love to him, to teſtifie how gladly he receives him: no, if there be one Robe better then another, he ſhall have it to clad him; and if one diſh better then another, he ſhall have it to feed him, the fatted Calf. The Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is the penitent Sinners cloathing, and garment the Father gives him. The Vertues of Chriſt and his Spirit incircle his Works, as a Ring his Finger. The preparations of the Goſpel of Peace ſhod his Feet, and the choiceſt demonſtrations of Love and Grace ſhewed forth and exhibited in Chriſt Crucified, and the precious promiſes

miſes therethrough made, & by his blood ratified are his feeding and nouriſhment. And now behold at this feaſt of fat things, God, and his Angels, and Servants will rejoyce with the reſtored convert, who ſhall ſit down and feaſt, and rejoyce with them in Chriſt Jeſus. Yea, God himſelf by his Spirit calls upon both his reſtored Son, and his miniſtring Servants to rejoyce together, ſaying, *Let us eat and be merry.* And why? not becauſe the ſinner hath ſo greatly ſinned, but becauſe he who by his ſin was ſo near deſtruction, is by grace reduced and brought back to ſalvation: for ſo it follows, *Ver.* 24. *For this my Son was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found: and they began to be merry.* Oh the wonderful grace and love of a merciful Father. Here are now no bad tearms given; 'tis not this Rogue, or Vagabond, this Adulterer, or Murtherer; but this my ſon was dead, and is alive; was loſt, and is found. And *they began to be merry*, for they had *Muſick and Dancing*, ſaith the next verſe; not ſuch as he uſed to have in his riotous living, that is fit for Rogues, and Whores, Bawds, and

Ruffians; but such as may become the Palaces of Religious Princes, or the Saints of Heaven; such as *Davids*, when he danced before the Ark, and as the Virgins and women of *Israel* used; and sometimes the Holy men upon occasions of rejoycing, and thanksgiving to God. But the Devil will marr this musick, and disturb this mirth if he can: and to this purpose, though he could not prevail with the elder Son to leave his Father, and turn Prodigal too, but he was hitherto dutiful and obedient, yet he will now infuse a bad and envious thought into him against his Brother, and put him into a froward and pettish humour against his Father, and the Servants, and all that forward, the such entertainment giving to one so far unlike him in his former demeanour: For so it follows, *Verse 25. Now his elder son was in the field.* (Not with his Father in the house, but it may be wandring in his minde, or his own wisdom, or perhaps about his Fathers business, and looking after his affairs in the services of his Law) *and as he came and drew near to the house* (to take notice how things were

in

in Gods Church) *He heard Muſick and Dancing*; he perceived ſome more than uſual mirth and rejoycing, *and* (wondering at it) *Verſe* 26. *He called one of the Servants, and asked what theſe things meant.* Verſe 27. *And he* (the Servant) *ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come* (thinking, that whom their Lord owned for his Son, the Servants might well call his Brother) *And thy Father hath killed the fatted Calf* (hath made a coſtly Feaſt) *becauſe he hath received him ſafe and ſound.* A fair anſwer, and well given. *Thy Father hath killed the fatted Calf*; as knowing his authority ſhould be great with him: and the very ſaying it was his Fathers act ſhould ſatisfie and content him. Whereas if they had done it, and made merry of their own heads without him, they might worthily have been charged with raſhneſs by him. But yet here is not only the Fathers authority alledged to ſatisfie him, but the ground and reaſon too upon which the Father did it, *Viz.* Becauſe he hath received thy Brother ſafe and ſound. That love to his Brother, as well as duty to his Father might work upon him. *Verſe* 28. *But he was*

angry and would not go in. Was discontented at his Fathers kindeness, and love to his Brother, and would not joyn with him, his Brother, and Servants, in their merry meeting, and rejoycing: and in this our Lord brings up this parable to the occasion of it, to shew the evil unreasonableness of the Pharisees murmuring, and taking offence at Christ for his receiving Publicans and Sinners, to hear him, and eating with them; that it was but like the folly, pride, and frowardness of such an Elder Son that should be angry at such a Father, and his Servants, for making merry for, and giving good entertainment to a prodigal repentant Son: But yet to instruct us in Gods lenity and goodness to all his Children, even his pettish Sons too: He addes, *Therefore came his Father out and entreated him.* A perfect pattern of a loving Father, and a right Emblem of God our heavenly Father; who, when by his authority, he might check and reprove the forwardness of a peevish Son, and command his coming in, waves the exercise of his authority, and gives way to his bowelly affection to steer, and lead him; and there-

therefore he *goes out and intreats him.* It had been the Sons part to judge his Father wiſer then himſelf, and to have acquieſced in his wiſdom and authority; and hearing that the mirth was by his order, and at his appointment, to have complyed with him: But where the Son fails of his duty, the Father exerciſes the more love; and laying aſide his authority, ſeeks to gain him to a better *Decorum*, by his greater condeſcenſion and goodneſs towards him. And well may the Servants intreat froward Children, and not be froward and fretful againſt them, when their Lord ſets them ſuch a pattern. But ſee how tenacious the paſſionate creature is of his peeviſhneſs; inſtead of the Sons being aſhamed that his Father that might command him in, ſhould abaſe himſelf ſo as to come out to him, and intreat him; as if he had ſhifted place and relation with his Father, very ſturdily and proudly replies upon him. And *Verſe* 29. *He* (whoſe mouth ſhould have been ſtopt by the very authority and preſence of his Father, much more by his intreating him, expoſtulates the matter with him, and) *an-*

ſwering, ſaid to his Father, Lo theſe many years have I ſerved thee, neither at any time have I tranſgreſſed thy commandment, and yet thou never gaveſt me a Kid, that I might make merry with my friends. Here is a very undutiful demeanour, an unchildlike anſwer; no ſign of any reverence, neither Sir, nor Father to uſher in his ſaying, but only a charge of unlovingneſs towards him; as if; according to the old complaint of froward people, he had ſerved God, his Father, for nought; and there was no profit in ſo doing: He draws up an account of his many years Service, his great dutifulneſs, and obedience, forgetting, and quite blotting out of his minde, all the great engagements that were upon him toward his Father, which might challenge more from him then he did or could have done; and he layes a charge againſt him of neglect, or ſparingneſs toward him: He had *never given him a Kid* (a leſſer matter then the *fatted Calf*) *to make merry with his friends.* Here we meet with a proof of the poſition we began with, that, as men are apt to minde and keep ſtrict account

count of their own righteousnes, and services, so its hard for them that do so, not to be proud; and from that principle wrangle with God, if he in all things please them not, in their humours, and act not to their mindes: and indeed to under-estimate Gods mercy and goodnes as much as they over-value their own righteousnes: for so did this elder son, in this froward fit, being ready to shift places with his Brother: and because he is received in, will keep himself out, and stand against his Fathers intreaties, to justifie himself in his so doing; for it was his Brothers reception that was the great thing stirred him, as the next words manifest, *viz. Ver.* 30. *But as soon as this thy Son was come, which hath devoured thy living with Harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted Calf.* Every word hath weight in it, and bespeaks him passionately froward. *But* (in a clean contrary carriage towards him to what thou hast had to me) *assoon* (without staying to see him sufficiently humbled and penitent; as if his Father was too hasty so to receive and respect him, and as implying it had been meeter

however to have frowned a while, yea, some long while, upon him, and made him lie and bewail himself (at least for sometime) first at his threshold, before he had received him, and welcomed him; *but assoon*) *as this thy Son* (*this*, by way of disdain, and *thy Son*, not *my Brother*, as if he scorned to own such a one as he for his Relation, much less his Brother; but *thy Son*, as if he had had a minde to disown himself a Son, or him his Father, because he so, and so suddenly owned him; and as if he only was made a Son by his Father, because he so welcomed him: *As soon as this thy Son was come*, before any longer probation or tryal was made of the reallity of his repentance, though he is he *that hath devoured thy living with Harlots*. See how he as much debases and aggravates his brothers Sin, as before he had amplified his own service and righteousnes; as if there was a direct Diametrical opposition between his own obedience: and this follows lewdnes. *He hath devoured thy living*, as if he had ravenously consumed all, and left his Father nothing to live on; when as it was but only that portion of it that

fell

fell to his lot or division: But envy and frowardness is passionately Rhetorical to aggravate what offends, with the largest note upon every circumstance, transports beyond all bounds of soberness, and leads to represent every thing in the worst colours: and therefore he also addes that he had *devoured his Fathers living with Harlots.* Though that's beyond the first relation of his evil courses, and more its likely then he had any positive evidence for, but what his passion suggested. His Father mention'd none of those things to him for gladness of his return, but blots them all out with an act of oblivion. Ah; but the froward Brother will rip them all up, and not suffer his Father, if it may be in his power, so to forget them; that if possible he may move him to undo his acts of Grace again, and seeing the error of his love, expel him his house, and make him once more seek his fortune; and no doubt but the Pharisaical wisdom of the offended Son, would readily suggest, that it was a far evener and more just carriage towards him; for his Father to have shut his doors upon him, then so soon to

have received him; yea, and becauſe he had voluntarily and of his own vain head run from his Father, and deſpiſed him, his Houſe, his Brother, and whatever elſe was therein; he ſhould now againſt his will have been made to keep from them, and go get his living with thoſe riotous companions he had preferred before them, and in thoſe places that he had haunted rather then his Fathers Habitation; or at leaſt to have made him bite by it a little after his return, and put him into the worſt apparel, and fed him with the worſt fare, and not the beſt his houſe afforded: So much wiſer are we apt to be in our pride of our ſelves, and uncharitableneſs to our ſinning Brethren, more then the moſt Holy, and only wiſe God, who as he is perfect in Judgment, ſo he hath more love and charity towards them; for this ſeems an intollerable reſpect to ſo vile a varlet (one whom others of his temper would be ready to call an whoremaſterly Villain) to make for him ſuch dainty provision, as is implied when he addes, *Thou haſt killed for him the fatted Calf*: Had it been killed for himſelf before, he

he would have thought it enough to let him taste of it; worser fare he thought might have been too good for him; but to kill any thing for such a lewd fellow, that mattered not to kill his Father, by spending his substance, to his grief; yea, to kill *the fatted Calf*, the most reserved dainty that his Father had, when as *he never at any time gave him a Kid*: Oh, how could he look upon such a partiality without indignation? and yet as intimately taxing his Father with such rashness, as to act all things without good advisement, or fore-consideration, or with such blindeness, through his too partial affection toward his disobedient Son, that he could see nothing either of his deserts from him on the one hand, or of his ungracious Sons demerits on the other, or of his own too much indulgence to sin (as if he hated it more, and were better then his Father) he prefixes an *Ecce* before all this heavy charge, thus drawn out in length. *Lo, these many years I serve thee, neither at any time transgressed I thy Commandement, and yet thou never gavest me a Kid to make merry with my Friends; but as soon as this thy son*

was

was come who hath devoured (or ſwallowed up) *thy living* (and there's an emphaſis in that word *devoured*; as if he greedily, like a glutton, or drunkard, without any regard of thee, or what ſhould become of thee, or thy glory, hath eaten, or ſwallowed up all thy living, and that) *with Harlots*; yet, *thou haſt killed for him the fatted Calf.* Oh how blinde is Love and Charity? how quick ſighted, how Eagle eyed jealouſie and paſſion? how eloquently can anger argue? here's nothing omitted that may exaggerate the Fathers over-ſight in his indulgent carriage towards his returned Son; as if his Father, like ſome old blinde man had ſeen nothing, but he ſees all both for himſelf, and againſt his Brother: and as if his Father had been as injurious to him, as fondly indulgent to his Brother, if his ſtomack could bear it ſo to repute and call him; but he will make his Father ſee how unequally he carried himſelf between them: he therefore ſets before him the *years*, yea, the *many years ſervice* he had performed to him, whereas ſo many years his other Son was run from him, and had left him to look after his con-

concernments himſelf for all him; yea, and the exactneſs of his obedience to him in all that time, *never at any time tranſgreſſing his Commandment*; whereas his brother on the contrary not only had not obeyed him, but alſo *greedily with Harlots conſumed his living*: and yet ſee how unequal the Father between them, he in all thoſe years *never gave him a Kid*, which was far leſs then the *fatted Calf*, though *to eat* in an honeſt way, and to *make merry*, not with Whores and Drabs, but *with his friends*; who, he being ſo dutiful a Son, could be no ſuch lewd Varlots, but perſons of good faſhion, and honeſt reputation; whereas on the other ſide his love was ſuch to his other Son, that notwithſtanding all his badneſs, & diſobediences, and miſ-ſpendings of his ſubſtance, he could no ſooner ſee him coming towards him, but he runs to meet him, and quicken him in his pace; and inſtead of chiding him, pitties, and kiſſes him, and kills the fatted Calf too, ſo ſoon as he gets him home to feaſt him. And had not this elder Son great reaſon to chide his Father, and refuſe to joyn himſelf with him,

him, and his other Son and Servants in ſuch a merry frollick, ſo inconſiderately made, as he hath repreſented it to him? have we not many that are ready to be of his minde? what, when they have ſaid their Prayers a thouſand times over, been good Church-men, honeſt livers, ſober perſons, no Thieves, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Harlots, or wicked livers, but have as they think, ſerved God juſtly, accordingly to the laudible cuſtoms of the Church, and perhaps alſo in private Prayers and Devotions, hearing Sermons, praying in their Families, faſting as often, and making as many and as long Prayers as the Phariſees, ſtrict and zealous in their converſations, abſtaining from all groſs and known ſins; yet they could never be aſſured of Gods owning them, nor meet with ſuch raviſhments of heart, as to cauſe them to rejoyce much in God, and to be willing to dye and depart this life: and lo, here or there a grat Sinner, a Whore, a Thief, a Murtherer, a wanton Perſon, being convicted of their Sins, and confeſſing their faults, and crying to God for his Mercy, liſtning to, and imbracing his

Goſ-

Gospel so inwardly filled with, and outwardly testifying their sense of Gods love, and exceeding comfort and consolation therein, that they can glory in God, as forgiving them their Sins, have hope in their Death, and talk of their assurance of Gods favour, as if they had been all their lives Saints: must not these either be deluded persons, or what what shall we say or think of God, but as those in Ezek. 18. 25. *That his wayes are unequal?* or, as in *Mal.* 2. 17. *That every one that is evil is good in the sight of the Lord, or else where is the God of judgement*, or *judgement of God?* where the equity of his doings, and proceedings with men. *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*, and *wilt be justified in thy sayings, and overcome when thou art judged* Psal. 22. 3. and 51. 4. stay then and let us see what the Father hath to say to his offended and discontented Son, before we justifie his plea, and pronounce on his side: and that is held forth in the words that I have chosen herein to treat on, as followeth.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Text Pharaphraſed.

Verſe 31. 32. *And he ſaid unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine: It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, was loſt and is found.*

IT is a true ſaying of *Solomon*, *He that is firſt in his own cauſe ſeemeth juſt, but his neighbour comes and ſearches him out*, Prov. 18. 17. For here we have an anſwer confutes all the Son hath ſaid in his paſſion, and clearly evinces the equity of the Fathers carriage between them, and of his thus entertaining his Son in his return. And firſt, here we may admire the Fathers meekneſs and gentleneſs towards a froward paſſionate Son, in that he gives him no bad nor angry language. He ſayes not, thou proud and inſolent fellow, that offereſt to make thy ſelf wiſer then thy Father, and lift-

eſt

eſt up thy ſelf above him, to call him him to an account, and draw a charge againſt him for his actings, as if thou wert wiſer, and of more authority then he; whereas its thy part and place to ſubmit thy ſelf to him, and give him honour in judging him wiſe, and righteous in his doings. No ſuch angry ſpeech proceeds from him, but only he gently calls him Son, and gives him a fair anſwer to his charge, and an account of his doings, ſhewing the great condeſcenſion and goodneſs of God to his pettiſh people in their ſpiritual Diſtempers. He ſees his Son was in a paſſion, and he would not take the courſe further to heat and inflame him, but ſeeks to calm him; like a loving Father, who ſeeing his Childes Body over-heated, and in danger to fall into a Feavour, endeavours ſome wayes its prevention: being wiſer then his Son, he ſets not himſelf to anſwer him according to his childiſh folly, but exerciſes love with judgement and diſcretion towards him: and though his Son in his anger would neither vouchſafe to call him Father, nor his Brother, Brother; yet he in whom fury

is

is not, but Love, Meekneſs, and Charity, will not therefore diſown or provoke him, but pacifie and rectifie him; and therefore calls him Son. Oh the graciouſneſs of God, as a loving Father to froward and male contented Children, eſpecially while he ſees their frowardneſs proceeds from ignorance, weakneſs, or the ſtrength of temptation: a pattern worthy imitation. Be we followers of of God as dear children, and walk we in love as Chriſt hath loved us, &c. Shall we weak, purblinde, and ſinful men, be froward with, and harſh to our froward brethren, when through temptation and weakneſs, envyings, ſwellings, and diſcontents befal them, when as our great God and Father is ſo graciouſly tender, milde, and gentle to ſuch, yea, to our ſelves, when ſo diſtempered and diſcompoſed towards him.

But ſee again how blinde paſſion is, though it ſeems to ſee very much, yea, and to ſee more then others that have not their hearts thereby heated and quickned to make diligent obſervation of things before them: It is indeed quick-ſighted of what makes for its nouriſh-

nouriſhment and ſtrengthning in its cauſe: but while it looks upon all ſuch things as it were through Multiplying and Magnifying Glaſſes, and ſees them more and greater then they be, and ſo repreſents them, it is ſo filled with the ſight of them, that it over-looks and ſees not other things before it, that judgement, charity, and right reaſon takes notice of, and the ſight whereof reduces the other things ſeen to their due ſcantling and proportion. For the calm judgment and charity of the wiſe and patient Father (the repreſentative of the moſt wiſe and merciful God) ſees and obſerves here what the Son over-lookt, and what might ſtop the mouth of his moſt clamorous paſſion. He was Eagle-eyed to ſee, yea, more than was to be ſeen of his own ſervice and obedience (which yet in this his paſſion he ſhewed but little of) but ſee not, or took no notice of his better condition, and greater obligements through his Fathers love and freeneſs towards him; which therefore the loving, meek, and wiſe Father for curing of his diſtemper, mindes him of ſaying, *Son thou art ever with me, and all*

that

that I have is thine (and what's a Kid or a fatted Calf to an Inheritance) that in his diſtemper was forgotten by him.

Peeviſh frowardneſs, and paſſionate envious diſtempers are no good guides or counſellors for us to liſten to, or to be led by in our judgements or goings; they ſee where they ſhould be blinde, and are blinde where they ſhould ſee: It is not for us to take notice of our ſervices and obedience, but God who is the wiſer and beſt eſtimator of them, and will not undervalue or underweigh them one grain, nor come ſhort in the leaſt reward of any thing truly acceptable in them, but is ready to reward them like a bounteous King, ſo as to ſhew his riches of liberality far above any inward excellency they have in them. It is for us, and more behooful and profitable, to minde and take notice of his love and goodneſs to us, to quicken us up to, and in our duties and obedience, and to preſerve us from proud and haughty miſcarriages, and froward repinings and murmurings at his dealings with us or others. The minding Gods goodneſs to us will beget and nouriſh

love

love and obedience in us to him, and then we ſhall not need to minde how dutiful and obedient we are to him, but rather ſhall ſee cauſe to confeſs our ſelves in all we do, unprofitable ſervants to him, that have done nothing but what his goodneſs already extended, challenges, and makes due from us; and ſo that we cannot challenge any thing of due debt or merit further from him: yet he will alſo, ſuch his goodneſs, minde to reward us with rewards undeſerved by us, and exceeding glorious. But as this proud and froward diſtemper made him overlook the goodneſs of his condition with his Father and his obligations to him; ſo it blinded him alſo from ſeeing what was meet to be done for, and toward his returned Brother, and the equitableneſs of his Fathers carriage towards him; which therefore his Father to cure him and argue him by reaſon and judgement out of his diſtemper, mindes him of alſo. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad.* That by his fatherly authority and wiſdom he layes down as a certain truth to be received and believed by his Son, as an Oracle, proceeding from his

his more perfect understanding, and unerring wisdom, teaching his Son, who in duty ought to hear his Fathers Instruction about what was meet, and not to take upon him to correct his Father, and be an instructor and teacher to him. The over-eying, and over-weaning of our graces, services, doings, duties, *&c.* are very apt to, yea, very certainly and necessarily do puff us up with spiritual pride, and that lifts us out of our places and makes us ready to *disanul Gods Judgment, and condemn the Almighty to justifie our selves, and make our selves righteous.* As God sayes of *Job* sinning in that way of sin through that root of spiritual pride, *Job* 40. 8. and instead of learning of God and Christ, to lift up our selves against them, quarrel with them, and set our selves to inform and teach them; doing as St. *Peter* did, who after he had heard, *Thou art Peter, and I will give to thee the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven,* by and by lifted up himself, as high as the Pope would be upon that Scripture lifted up by men, to alter and correct his Masters sayings and doings, going therein before him, and not coming

ing after him him as Disciples and learners use to do to their Masters: *Mat.* 16. 18, 19, 22, 23. yea, taking him aside and rebuking and advising him as if his Keyes of the Kingdom gave him authority over him, and his Doctrine too; as the Pope practices upon that pretence with Christ and his Institutions, thereby proving himself to be, and to deserve the name of a Satan, as Christ gave to St. *Peter*, upon that account: and we may very safely, by the by, observe this truth, that while the Pope or any else, under pretence of having the Keyes of the Kingdom given them, do take upon them to alter and correct Christs sayings or doings, his Ordinances and Institutions (as they do in the order and manner of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper amongst other things, coming in with their *non obstante*, though Christ ordered thus, yet that notwithstanding we order it otherwise, though Christ ordered, and the Apostles practised the receit of the Supper in both kindes, yet we for all that, order it to be received in one kinde only; though God hath forbidden the worship of Images,

and

and Christ came not to dissolve his Fathers Laws, yet we command them to be made and worshipped, *&c.* While I say the Pope and his Councils or any else do thus) they are so far from being the Rock, Foundation, or the Head of the Church, that they are Satans, enemies, and adversaries to Christ and his Church, and so plainly Antichrists. Yet this the pride of gifts, places, offices, and services puffs up men too usually to. But the Father would have his froward Son here reduced into better order, and as Christ said to *Peter*, come behinde him, and hear, and learn of him, not argue against him, and rebuke him; as here he did, opposing his Fathers practice and order of making merry for his lost Son found again. *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad.* Prepare a feast for mirth, and make mirth outwardly at it, and be glad too inwardly, and in heart.

But he doth not only instruct him, and teach him, or by his Fatherly wisdom and authority dictate so much to him; but also demonstrates the truth of his doctrine by solid and sound reason, that he

he might as well inform his judgement, and make him see the truth of his saying with his own eyes or understanding, as it were, as well as assure him of it upon his own authority, and the authority of his saying, which ought for it self to be received, because he is the Lord, though he gave us no other account of it: and indeed this is one great difference between the Law and the Gospel. The Law delivers precepts from God barely upon the account of his authority, Thou shalt do, or not do thus, for I am the Lord: But the Gospel insinuates things to us, and perswades us to them by reason as laying down the grounds and reasons why, that we might offer to God, *A reasonable service*, Rom. 12. 1. whence also as Christ is called (λόγος) by a name signifying not only word, but reason, *John* 1, 1. So they that believe not the Gospel, are called (ἄτοποι) *Absurd or unreasonable men*, 2 Thess. 3. 2. and so I say here, the better to convince him, that he doth not impose upon him meerly by his fatherly authority (though that might have been sufficient to have silenced him) he also condescends to shew

(as all the way of the Goſpel is a way of condeſcenſion) that there is reaſon and equity in what he ſayes, and that he might ſee and be ſilenced, and brought to ſubmiſſion, he addes, *For this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, was loſt, and is found.* Paſſion had blinded his reaſon, and extinguiſhed his affection to his poor Brother, ſo as he took no notice of any relation between them; and pride ſo tranſported him, that he even ſcorned to ſee or own his relation. This thy Son ſaith he to his Father, as if he could be his Fathers Son, and yet not his Brother; or as if a brotherly relation was nothing to challenge and excite compaſſion, love, and affection to him. Oh forſooth, he was ſo holy, juſt, and righteous (above his Father it ſeems) that he diſdained to own him for, or call him his Brother, though his Father had owned and called him Son: as if he would have intimately ſaid, What ſhould I own ſuch a vagabondly Rogue, or riotous Raſcal, or Whoremaſterly Spend-thrift as this for my Brother? As ſome ſuch riotous livers amongſt us in their own eyes would be ready to ſay of ſuch,

ſuch, though they have confeſſed their ſins, and been afflicted for them. Should I believe that God will give pardon, and peace, and aſſurance ſo eaſily to ſuch miſcreants? But the calm unpaſſioned, and loving Father calls him to a calm remembrance, that for all that, whatever he had been, or done, he is yet thy Brother. Hath not one God made us? yea, and of one mold, and of the ſame blood, whether Jews, or Gentiles, bond or free, zealous or prophane? yea, did not one Chriſt dye for us? and being called and brought to him, to believe in him, and ſubmit to his grace; are we not all in him that do ſo, juſtified, and made righteous, and the children of God by the faith of Jeſus? whoſe blood waſhes away both the greater ſins of the prodigal Spend-thrifts, and the leſſer murmurings and ſpiritual diſtempers of the ſelf-over-weaning Saint, or more righteous liver. The ſame good Creditor forgave *Simons* fifty pence, and the ſinful womans five hundred, *Luke* 7. 41, 42. and had it not been that he had forgiven both, both might have gone to, and lien in the priſon, neither having to ſatisfie

what was owing: Nay, a Debtor that owes ten thousand Talents, humbling himself to his Creditor, and craving forgiveness, and being forgiven, may walk abroad boldly, and look upon his Creditors face securely, and confidently, when he that owes but fifty pence, taking his Brother that owes him less, by the throat, and being uncharitable to him, and being not pardoned or forgiven his less debt by the Creditor, may not dare to walk abroad, or shew his head for fear of an arrest, or be in so good a condition as the far greater Debtor that hath received a discharge for what was owing. *This thy Brother*, (This was a particle of contempt in the Son toward his Brother, when he said, *This thy Son.* But a particle of Commiseration and moving to compassion in the Father, when he saith, *This thy Brother*, as if he would say, canst thou behold him, and see him here present, even this thy Brother so marvellously preserved and recovered, and not commiserate him, nor rejoyce for him? Canst thou so far lay aside all natural affection, and banish all remorse or joy from thine heart

heart concerning him? This thy Brother *was dead, was lost*; as if he would have said, Thy evil eye is upon thy brothers doings, but my good and merciful eye is upon his sufferings: thou takest notice in thy pride, envy, and passion of what he acted, and how he hath lived and aggravatest that to the heighth, he ran away, spent, yea, devoured my living, and that with Harlots, was a Rogue, a Whoremaster, or the like; but my fatherly heart bleeds to think what a case he was in, what miseries he met with, what sorrows he sustained in his absence; went not my heart after him where he went? and did not mine eyes behold him under the figtree? when he began to want, and joyned himself as a Servant, or an Apprentice to a Citizen of a strange Countrey,; he that was free born being brought into bondage, and he that might have lived as well as thou being reduced to beggery. I think upon his servile state, and what drudgery work he hath been put to, while thou hast lived like a Prince, or Gentleman, and seest not poverty or want. I think on his base

employment, his hungry belly, his ragged and naked back, his pining griefs, and pinching ſorrows, even unto phrenſie; diſtracting him ſo grievouſly, that he knew not what he did, nor whether he went: my tender bowels rowl within me to think of theſe his ſad ſufferings; yea, and then was he moſt dead, when he leaſt ſee his danger, and maddeſt when he was the merrieſt. He hath eaten the fruit of his own wayes, and been filled with his own inventions. Thou haſt lived pleaſurably to him, and knoweſt not what were the ſad effects of his ſinnings; hadſt thou, thou wouldſt have had more pitty on him, and compaſſion towards him. He is my Son, but he was dead; thy Brother, and he was dead: ſo great his ſufferings, ſorrows, and miſeries, as bereft him of all life and ſenſes; he was loſt, no where to be found in Houſe, or Fields, till his own miſeries that he pull'd upon himſelf fell ſo hard upon him, as to make him remember himſelf, and return to me. I and thou might call him, but he was out of the hearing of our voice. My ſervants might call and ſeek him, but

he

he was gone and not to be heard of. Thou loſt nothing by ſerving me, but he loſt all he had, yea, himſelf was loſt by deſerting me, and going from me: didſt thou loſe but a Sheep or Kid, thou wouldſt reſent it, and be troubled for it; yea, thou takeſt it to heart that I have killed the fatted Calf; and was one ſuch creature more to thee then thine own Brother that was dead, and loſt? Oh the mercies of God above our mercies to one another! we ſee and note this and that evil ſuch a one hath done, but God knows the dangers they were in, the ſorrows of their hearts, their ſecret ſighs and groans, the throbs and ſobs that they have met with, as the fruits of their ſins, when Gods Spirit hath been removed and withdrawn, or driven from them by their iniquities and rebellions againſt him; the bangs of Conſcience, and bleedings of heart, the fears, the deſpairs, the inward horrors, and outward feelings of correction ſometimes upon them, in loſſes, poverty, or the like; the ſpiritual death and loſtneſs of their ſouls from the feeling of Gods preſence, and the comforts thereof, or any aptneſs

or desire to any spiritual action, and so the danger of being lost for ever. These God hath his eye upon that we see not usually, nor are apt to think on; no, no, we would have them yet kept from God, and his Comforts, and Consolations, and are ready to say, let them bite by it yet, let them rowl themselves in ashes, feel the displeasure of God and men against them without pitty or comfort intermixed; at least for some long, long time, till they have made amends for their wicked doings, and testified so much sorrow and amendment as may give us satisfaction. We would not deal so with our Sheep; if they through their wandring fall into a Ditch, and be almost drowned, we would not let them lie there because they fillily fell in, nor when they are pull'd out, thrust them in again, or put them into the pin-fold; much less with our Children, if they, though contrary to our counsels will straggle and play about till they fall into a Ditch, or Pit, or Oyl-Fat, and be therein drowned, we will not let them lie because they fell in of their own wantonness and carelessness; or having pull'd them out,

if

if they revive, turn them out of doors, and ſtarve them, but tender them, get them to warm Bed, and give them cordials and comfortable things that we judge needful to reſtore their ſtrength again; and ſhould we not do ſo to our poor Brethren after they have been toſt and turmoiled, ſhipwrack't, and dead, and loſt, and are revived again?

This thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, was loſt and is found. The ſame conſideration that led him to receive him and make the feaſt for his entertainment (verſe 23, 24. *For this my ſon was dead and is alive again, was loſt, and is found.*) He propoſes to his Son to quiet him, and to induce him to be content to joyn with them *This thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, was loſt and is found.* Had he been ſtill dead and loſt, no ground for rejoycing or merriment, but for mourning. We have no cauſe of rejoycing, but only and altogether for mourning and lamenting for ſinners, thoſe that erre and live evilly, ſo long as they go on in ſuch their wayes, and are held faſt in the ſnares and cords of their errors and iniquities; but when

they are recovered out of them, and returned back to God, then we may rejoyce for them, and be glad, becauſe of Gods goodneſs therein towards them; and eſpecially when we may perceive God alſo to forgive and comfort them, and to fill them with his conſolations. Such was the caſe of this repenting and recovered Prodigal. He was dead (even he that was my Son, and thy Brother, as if he had ſaid) but he is alive again. He is returned to God, and God and his quickning Spirit are returned to him again; and he is indued with the principles of life and grace again; He is begot and brought to hope in, love, and cleave to God, who was hopeleſs, helpleſs, and quite gone from God; and he who was loſt, whoſe preſence we had not with us, and who walked not in our family and wayes, is reduced, is found again. It is meet therefore now that we be merry and glad.

Obj. *Ah, but perhaps the return of this Son may intrench upon the happineſs and riches of the other, he muſt have another portion, and that will diminiſh the Portion of the elder Brother?*

Anſ. No,

Anſw. No, the Father hath ſecured him againſt that too, when he ſaid, *All that I have is thine*, not only *hath been*, but *is* ſtill, though he take part with thee its thine nevertheleſs ſtill, & enough to maintain both him and thee; there's nothing required or deſired but that he live, and take part with thee, of what is mine and thine, and enough for both of you, and all my Family: his well and comfortable living ſhall be no impairing of, or impeachment to thy felicity. God is a Sun and Fountain, he ſo imparts himſelf and his Grace and Bleſſing to one, that he hath thereby never the leſs for any others: he is not emptied by the multitude of thoſe that receive of his fulneſs. As the Philoſophers ſay of the ſoul, that *it is all in the whole body and all in every part of it*, and no other part hath the leſs of it by any part having it all, even ſo is it of a certainty with God, he is wholly the portion of the abiding and ſtanding Saints, and ſo he is too for thoſe that having fallen, are raiſed up again. Nor hath any the leſs by every, or any y

Tota in toto, & tota in qualibet parte.

any ones having all: ſo that no cauſe for any to envy at anothers happineſs, or murmur, or repine at Gods freeneſs to any other; ſeeing their having never ſo much leaves never the leſs in him for them alſo.

And thus I have gone over this Parable, briefly by way of Paraphraſe, eſpecially theſe laſt verſes. Now let us further conſider what we may obſerve from them.

CHAP. IV.

An enquiry into the meaning of the two Sons.

BUT firſt it will be needful for us that we may the better underſtand and profit by what is ſet before us herein, to enquire who are meant by theſe two Sons (chiefly the elder) to whom theſe two Verſes addreſs their contents.

1. May we take them for Men and Angels, Angels the Elder, and Men the younger Son; indeed both are called, and may be underſtood to be in the Scriptures

ptures meant by thoſe titles, the Sons of God. Some underſtand, *Job* 1. 6. and 2. 1, to ſpeak of Angels, when its ſaid, *The Sons of God preſented themſelves before God, and Satan came amongſt them*: It may be ſo, and it may be otherwiſe taken. Many of the Ancients thought the *Sons of God*, ſaid in *Gen.* 6. 2. to *Have gone in to the daughters of men*, to have been Angels: and ſo they might be if we by Angels underſtand ſuch as they of the ſeven Churches, *Rev.* 2. and 3. but ſurely that in *Job* 38. 7. that all the Sons of God ſhouted for joy when He laid the foundations of the earth, ſeems neceſſarily to be underſtood of them: And for men its ſaid, *Adam was the Son of God*, as we may conſtrue, *Luke* 3.38: And the Angels were made before men, and ſome of them fell before men too; but of the fallen Angels nothing here can be underſtood. Thoſe that ſtand indeed ſerve God, and keep his Commandments, being *ready to do his will, hearkening to the voice of his words*, Pſal. 103. 19. And man went aſtray from God like a poor loſt Sheep, and was recovered again in and by Chriſt, who was ſlain

for

for him, and is become, and is propoſed of God to be mans food: yet I cannot underſtand thoſe good Angels to be here meant by the elder Son, becauſe I no where finde they are, or ever were, angry at the goodneſs of God to man in ſeeking his recovery, or entertaining him being recovered, with joy and mirth. No, they are more wiſe, intelligent, and loving Spirits, and fuller of Charity to us then to be offended at Gods goodneſs towards us: they deſirouſly pry, or peep into the myſtery and efficacy of the Goſpel, Ἐπιθυμοῦσι παρακύψαι, deſire with longing to peep down into it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. and here, *verſe* 10. it is ſaid, that there is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth, which ſome render *apud Angelos*, with the Angels: they may rather therefore be included among the houſhold Servants that attend the Sons. *Beza*

2. We may apply it to the Jews and Gentiles; The Jews as the elder, the Gentiles as the younger Brother? they both were *made of one blood* indeed,

Acts

Acts 17. 26. and so are brethren, as one God made them, *Mal.* 2. 10. and though we read of the Gentiles before any mention of the Jews, *Gen.* 10. 5. yet the Jews being first called to, and indued (even in and from their fore-fathers) with the knowledge of God and his Mysteries after such a distinction of of two peoples found in the world; and God calling them his first born (*Israel is my first-born*, Exod. 4. 21, 22.) they may be understood by the eldest Son to whom also God gave himself, and with himself all things, to be their Inheritance; and they were comparatively to the Gentiles keepers of the Law: and we finde that many of them did over-wean their services to God according to the Law, and were often ready to expostulate with God like the eldest Son here upon that account, that *they fasted, and he regarded* it not, *sought him*, but he *took no notice of them*, that they *served him in vain*, *and walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts, and kept his ordinance*; yet he loved and esteemed them not. *Isa.* 58. 2, 3. *Mal.* 1. 2. and 3. 13, 14, 15. they took also great offence, and stumbled at

the

the Gentiles Converſion and reception into the Church of God by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles, and upon that account partly ſtand out ſtill: Whence its ſaid, *They are enemies to the Goſpel for the Gentiles ſake*, Rom. 11. 28. all this may be ſaid for this interpretation, and may render it probable that there was ſome eye upon them in this parable: But yet ſeeing there was no colour for their ſaying, that they had ſerved God many years, and never at any time tranſgreſſed againſt his Commandments, and that he never gave them a Kid, *&c*, it being manifeſt that they were very rebellious againſt him, as to the body of them, and often tranſgreſſed by Idolatry and otherwiſe, and were many of them as prophane and bad as the Gentiles; and Chriſt was Crucified for that Nation, though not for that Nation only, *John* 11. 51, 52. yea, the feaſt of fat things firſt made for, and tendered to them, they the firſt bidden and invited Gueſts: yea, and they firſt rejected that Feaſt before the Gentiles were preached to, and invited in; and their firſt ſtanding out was not upon that account; nay rather, becauſe they

they first stood out the Gospel was sent to the Gentiles. Whence its said, *That the fall of them was the riches of the world*, and that *through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles, and the casting them away is the reconciling of the world*, Rom. 11. 11, 13, 15. All which sayings imply that they first stumbled at Christ, and the preaching of Christ before the Gentiles were called in. As to that purpose also those passages in *Mat.* 22. 7, 8, 9. *Luke* 14. 20, 21. *Acts* 13. 46, 47, 48. and 28, 27, 28. speak; therefore it doth not so properly seem, and so fully to agree to them generally considered, though in some sense as stumbling at the call of the Gentiles also, and being offended at the Gospel preaching to them it may be applied to them.

3. Or may we apply it to the Pharisees and Publicans? indeed that it took its rise and occasion of being propounded from, because the Pharisees who thought themselves righteous and in a sense were so comparatively to the Publicans (that is in respect of their observing and strictly cleaving to the Laws of *Moses*, and abstaining from all grosser

sins

ſins that were notorious, and taken notice of by men as ſuch) were offended at Chriſt for his Grace to the Publicans and Harlots, who were evidently breakers of Gods Laws, and walked contrary thereto, and all of them were of that people that had the adoption, and the name of Gods Sons upon them; ſo as the Gentiles in diſtinction from the Jews had not, and the Publicans and Harlots entred into the Kingdom of God before them, as our Saviour ſayes, *Mat.* 21, 32. and they and the Phariſees are repreſented by our Saviour in *ver.* 38. by two Sons of one man: but then the Phariſees there are compared to the elder Son that ſaid to his Father, that he would go into his Vineyard and went not, whereas the other ſaid the contrary, yet repented and went; they repenting at the preaching of *John*, and betaking themſelves alſo to Chriſt, as the Phariſees did not, *Luke* 7. 29, 30. I think though it may be applied to them, and our Saviour ſpeaks it to them, and in their hearing, for their Inſtruction, yet there can hardly be a full accommodation of that in *ver.* 31. to them, that they were

Gods

Gods Sons, and were ever with him, and all he had were theirs. Christ (at least afterward) used to speak at a rougher rate to them, yea, and *John* the Baptist before calling them Serpents, a Generation of Vipers, Hypocrites, yea, Children of Hell, and the Devil: But there might be difference of them; some that were not such opposers of Christ and his Doctrine; such as *Nicodemus* that came to him by night, and *Simon*, whose debts he seems to imply were forgiven him, though not so great and many as the womans that he called and looked upon as a sinner, an infamous woman, and inwardly murmured at Christs graciousness towards, *Luke* 7. 36, 37, 42, 43, &c. Others were proud, scornful opposers, and persecutors of Christ and his truth, trusting in themselves that they were righteous, and in the right way, and condemning him of error and deceit; and those he calls Serpents, and generation of Vipers, Children of Hell, and of the Devil: and if we so look upon it, and apply it to the first sort of them (of which also *Paul* confesses himself to be one, even after he was a Chri-

Christian and an Apostle. I am a Pharisee, the Son of a Pharisee, *Acts* 23. 6, that word signifying but one separated to the study and observation of the Law of God, the strictest Sect of Religion amongst the Jews; much what like what used to be called amongst us, Puritans, and now Presbyterians, *&c.* some of whom doubtless may be, and were honest and good Christians) then it will agree to another sense, that I am most satisfied in, and think to be the rightest and fullest, *viz.*

4. By the two Sons I understand two kindes of people both begotten to, and born of God, adopted by him for his Children, through Jesus Christ, either as implicitly held forth, as before his coming, or explicitly as since; one of these compared to the younger Son are they that after some time taking, and attributing the Gifts and Graces of God to themselves, and considering and growing full in themselves through them, depart from God, and run into by-paths, and sinful courses, tending to the destruction of their souls, wasting and consuming Gods gift, and talents upon their

their own and other mens luſts. The other ſort compared to the elder Son, ſuch as after grace received, and their call and birth as it were into, or in Gods houſe, abide therein, and cleave to God, and his word, and the commands and councels thereof walking juſtly and holily with God in the main, and not departing from him, as open ſinners do; for unto ſuch it may be ſaid, as is here ſaid by the Father more fully and properly. Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine, as *David* ſaith of ſuch, *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way that walk in the Law of the Lord. Bleſſed are they that keep his teſtimonies, and ſeek him with the whole heart; they alſo do no iniquity that walk in thy wayes,* Pſal. 119. 1, 2, 3. Men that are truly righteous and accepted of God, and turn not aſide to crooked paths as others do.

Only here it might be queſtioned, whether ſuch perſons may be guilty of ſuch pride and frowardneſs as is here ſet forth in the elder Son and his carriage; ſuch diſdain at erring and repenting Sinners, ſuch quarrelling at God and his dealings.

dealings. And it ſeems to me they may, and ſometimes have been found, and yet are guilty of ſuch like diſtempers through their over-weaning their own righteouſneſs, and walkings, and diſlike, as they apprehend of others wickedneſs. Yea, we have divers inſtances of ſuch like frowardneſs befalling and exerting it ſelf in ſuch more cloſe-walking Believers and righteous perſons upon divers accounts: as to ſay.

1. Sometimes becauſe they ſee and perceive, and with a carnal eye (which yet may be in true and right Diſciples; elſe Chriſt would not have ſaid to ſuch, If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out and caſt it from thee) do behold and look upon the outward proſperity, riches, honours, and welfare of looſe ungodly perſons that are and continue to be ſo; and on the other hand reflect upon their own ſufferings and troubles: Thus we finde that good man *Aſaph* confeſſing to us that ſuch a view of things had like to have turn'd him aſide, and made him ſlip: yea, it brought him to ſuch a paſs as that he was actually *envious at the fooliſh when he ſaw the proſperity of the wicked*,

wicked, and came to this conclusion, *Verily in vain have I cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency, for all the day long have I been plagued and chastned every morning*, Psal. 73. 13, 14. Whence also so frequent warnings and councels given to such by the Holy Ghost, *Not to envy sinners, nor fret themselves because of such as prosper in wickedness, and that bring evil devices to pass*; as is to be seen in *Psal.* 37. *Prov.* 3. 29, 31. and 23. 17, 18. and 24. 1. 19, 20. and the same carnal eye that leads to envy and be discontented at God for the outward prosperity of the openly wicked, may lead them to stumble and be displeased at God for giving such upon their repentance more gracious testimonies of his love, and ravishing satisfactions and assurance of Salvation then they have proved or felt in their more sober and zealous walking.

2. Sometimes because God doth heavily try and exercise them with inward and outward troubles and afflictions; therefore over-weaning their own integrity, righteousness, and good doings, they are ready to expostulate with God,

God, and condemn and fault him as much as this elder Brother his righteous Father: and this was *Jobs* case, and weakness: sure it is that he was no Pharisee (as that word is used to signifie a seemingly righteous man only, and a real Hypocrite) for he hath testimony from God that he was a perfect man, and upright above any in the Land, one fearing God, and eschewing evil; and he could in truth (and did) say a great deal of his uprightness and integrity, his holy, blameless, and good demeanor, in *chap.* 29. and 31. more then any man scarce can say I believe, and so much as put to silence the jealous and false surmises, and groundless charges of his deceitful friends that would have fastned upon him the blame of hypocrisie and wickedness; and yet he over-valuing his righteousness, and looking, and standing too much upon it, fell into this distemper, to murmur against, and fault the Almighty, *condemning him, and disannulling his judgement, that he might be righteous:* as this froward Son did, faulting God, in vindication of his own integrity; as if God punished him with-

without cauſe, and did more to him then he could anſwer; and if a perfect upright man through temptation may fall into ſuch a proud and froward diſtemper in one caſe, it may be poſſible alſo in another.

3. But we have inſtances too of righteous and good men, charging God fooliſhly, and murmuring againſt men for his and their reſpect to penitent ſinners, and for his equalizing or ſeeming to prefer them in his kindneſs, who were below them in their works of righteouſneſs, and over eſtimated goodneſs: A three-fold inſtance at the leaſt we have of this.

1. The believing Jews when they heard that *Peter* had gone in to *Cornelius* (*Acts* 11. 1.) and eaten and drunk with them that were profeſſed Gentiles, that is, uncircumciſed perſons, murmured at him for it, and took him to task, till by repeating the whole matter, with its grounds and reaſons to them, he gave them ſatisfaction; and then they indeed acquieſced, and glorified God for giving unto them alſo repentance unto life; but before they contended

with, and accuſed him, and that's all that we finde this Son did to his Father; and as they, after St. *Peter* had opened the matter to them acquieſced, ſo might this Son after this defence made by his Father; for we finde no reply thereto made by him, nor further mention of him, as we do of the zealous Jews afterward that were Chriſtians, *Acts* 21.20.

2. The labourers firſt hired into the Vineyard, *Matth.* 20. 1, 11. when they came to receive their pay, becauſe they that were hired at the eleventh hour of the day, receiving their pay firſt, received as much as they, who had been hired early in the morning, murmured againſt the Maſter of the houſe, as if he had done them wrong, in making them who had *laboured but a little while* equal in their pay with them *who had born the burden and heat of the day*, ſaying, *Theſe have wrought but one hour, and thou haſt made them equal with us*, ver. 12. and yet theſe appear to have been righteous perſons; for in his anſwer he excepts not againſt their ſaying, *they had born the burthen and heat of the day*, as accuſing them of falſhood in their plea,

and

and as if they had been unrighteous loyterers, and not labourers, and they were rewarded for their work according to agreement, and promiſe, and had the ſame reward as thoſe laſt that ſeemed to be more favoured: Their exception againſt him was not that they had leſs then he had promiſed them, or then they had been content at firſt to labour all the day for, but only that he made the laſt that had wrought ſo little a time equal with them, to whom therefore all his anſwer is, *Friend I do thee no wrong, didſt thou not agree with me for a peny? is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil becauſe mine is good? take that thine is, and go thy way, I will give to this laſt as unto thee*, ver. 13, 14, 15. Indeed this is not altogether the ſame caſe: but if righteous rewardable perſons (ſuch as the Apoſtles, for ſo the occaſion of the parable which was St. *Peters* taking notice of what they had done, for Chriſt ſeems to carry it) may in conſideration of their labours, and Gods bounty to others that have laboured leſs, fall into ſuch diſtempers for his goodneſs to them, be-

cauſe equalized with them in the reward; may it not be eaſier in caſe God ſeems to them to prefer ſuch before them therein, or rather ſuch as have done him great diſſervice upon their acknowledging only, and repenting of their ſin? as it happened to St. *Paul.*

3. The Prophet *Jonah* undoubtedly was a good and gracious man, being a Prophet of the Lord, and a Type of Chriſt, and yet he fell into a peeviſh diſtemper, like to this of this elder Son, becauſe God had not more reſpect to him, and his honour, and credit, as a Prophet (as he thought its likely it would tend to his diſparagement) then to repenting *Nineveh* which was threatned by him before their repentance, to be deſtroyed after forty dayes time. The repenting *Ninivites* were like this repenting Prodigal, *They believed Gods threatning, and repented, and put away their evil works; and God alſo repented of the evil which he had threatned to bring upon them, and deſtroyed them not.* And as the Fathers entertainment of his Son diſpleaſed the elder Brother here: ſo did Gods mercy and indulgence to *Nineveh* diſ-

displeaſe *Jonah* there: for it is ſaid, *The thing displeaſed Jonah exceedingly* (as if it had been ſome great evil that had befallen him) *and he was angry with him, and he prayed unto the Lord and ſaid,* Jonah 4. *I pray thee, O Lord, was not this the ſaying that I ſaid while I was yet in mine own Land; therefore fled I before unto Tarſhiſh? for I knew that thou art gracious, and merciful, long-ſuffering, and of great kindeneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil: and now, O Lord, take I beſeech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die then to live.* What a peeviſh froward temper was this good man in, that could have been content to have died for grief that *Nineveh* was ſpared? whence the Lord ſaid to him, *Doeſt thou well to be angry?* and ſhewed him his folly, in that, when *Jonah* went out of the City, and ſate and abode on the Eaſt-ſide of it, and had made a Booth, and ſate under it till he might ſee what would become of the City; and God had prepared a Gourd, which grew up above *Jonah*, and was a ſhade to him, defending him from the heat of the Sun,

ſo that he was exceeding glad of it: He alſo prepared a worme, that on the morrow ſmote the Gourd that it withered; and in the morning he prepared an Eaſt-winde that was drying, and the Sun beat upon *Jonah's* head, ſo as he fainted, ſo as he then deſired to dye rather then to live: whereupon the Lord ſaid to him, *Doeſt thou well to be angry for the Gourd*, and he in his great frowardneſs replyed, *I do well to be angry to the death*, juſtifying himſelf in his frowardneſs as this Elder Son did; as if God had done him a double injury, one, in being ſo merciful to that cruel, bloody, heatheniſh City, and another in being ſo harſh to him, as to take away the comfort and ſhelter of the Gourd from him, thereby expoſing him to ſo much trouble; much what as this Elder Son quarrelled with his Father for his ſuppoſed ſtraitneſs to him, and for his goodneſs to his Brother, till God anſwered him there as the Father did his Son here, to allay his heat and paſſion, ſaying, *Thou haſt pitty on that Gourd that thou never laboureſt for, neither didſt thou make it to grow, but it ſprung up in a night,*

and

and perished in a night, and should not I have mercy on Nineveh, a great City, in which are more then six score thousand persons which know not their right hand from their left, besides much Cattle? Shewing (as our Lord in these Parables) how apt men are to be pittiful towards, and tender over trifles, and yet they are ready to take it ill, that God so tenders, and shews his compassion to the immortal souls of his choice creatures.

Indeed there was a difference between *Jonah* and this Elder Son, if we take for true his passionate proclaiming his own dutifulness and obedience. *Jonah* could not say as he, that he never at any time transgressed any of Gods Commandments; for he had but a little bebefore gone quite contrary to his Commandement, flying to *Tarshish*, when God sent him at the first to preach to *Nineveh*, for which God made him smart, by causing him to be cast into the Sea, where he had perished had he not upon his repentance and crying to God found wonderous mercy from him, in preparing a Whale, and causing it after three dayes and three nights to vomit

him out upon the ſhore, ſafe and ſound. But this was ſuch a circumſtance as renders the caſe far more for our advantage; for one would have thought that ſuch a notable tranſgreſſion deſerving ſuch, and a greater puniſhment, and putting him upon ſuch a need of crying for mercy himſelf, and ſuch a ſignal unparallel'd mercy obtained of God, ſhould have made him more to compaſſionate others that ſinned, and more well-pleaſed, that they ſhould in their repentance obtain mercy too. Experiences of miſeries uſe to make men more compaſſionate to others, and mercies ſhewed to our ſelves ſhould make us more deſirous of mercy to others, whom like or worſe miſeries have either layen upon, or are at preſent impending over: but it was otherwiſe with *Jonah*, he that had needed and cryed for, and obtained mercy for himſelf but a little before, without which he had been no more heard of, even he hardens his heart againſt ſuch as needed like mercy now, and could be angry unto death, that God ſhould take ſuch care to call them to repentance, and upon their repenting

ſpare

ſpare them. Now if truly righteous perſons after great lapſes themſelves, and mercies received, may murmur at Gods mercies to others, becauſe they obtain mercy upon repentance, who had before deſerved to have been deſtroyed: how much more may it befall ſuch perſons, having in their apprehenſions never ſo offended, or been in ſuch a plunge, but alwayes in a poſture of duty and obedience, being puſt up thereby to fall into paſſions and offences, to ſee groſs ſinners upon an appearingly ſlighty repentance, received to ſuch favours as they have never had experience of the like?

Theſe things ſeem to render valid the interpretation of the words that I have given; beſides the words themſelves anſwered here by the Father to his froward Son; Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine, which agree unto none ſo properly as unto truly righteous, and obedient Children. And the words ſo looked upon, though they do not ſuit juſt with the generality of the Jews or Phariſees, who were Hypocrites, nor may be ſo conſtrued as to

render them truly righteous; yet by an argument from the greater to the leſs, do more ſtrongly reprove them after *this* ſort. If perſons truly righteous, and in the main dutiful and obedient, have no cauſe to murmur at Gods great mercies towards grievous ſinners, if upon their repentance they be not only pardoned, but alſo meet with ſuch joyes and expreſſions of gladneſs in God and his Servants, as themſelves never had proof and experience of; much leſs have formal Profeſſors, carnal Chriſtians, or Hypocrites, that have nothing but a form of Worſhip, and an appearance of Godlineſs and Devotion, and that mixed too, with great blindeneſs, oppoſition to Chriſt, his wayes and truth, and with many other great latent evils (and ſome open enough too ſometimes) much leſs I ſay have ſuch cauſe to murmur at Gods mercies to penitent ſinners, and think themſelves ſlighted in that their formal, out-ſide, and Phariſaical Profeſſions are leſs regarded: foraſmuch as their formal Devotion and Religion is far ſhort of the groſſer Sinners hearty repentance and turning unto God.

God. Such ſinners might ſay to them, as the Thief upon the Croſs to his fellow that mocked at Chriſt, *Feareſt thou not God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation*, in as bad a condition by thy reſting in an ignorant, formal, out-ſide profeſſion, without inward life and power, and therein indulging thy ſelf in ſome ſeemingly leſs, but as well forbidden corruptions (ſuch as their ſwearing by the Temple, and by the Altar, and thinking themſelves guiltleſs therein, when God had forbidden to ſwear, ſave by his Name, and by his Name too, cuſtomarily, raſhly, or falſly; ſomewhat like mens ſwearing by their Faith and Troth, or by the Maſs, or by the Name of God cuſtomarily, and ſuch other Oaths in which they hold themſelves innocent, *Mat.* 23. 16, 17, 18, 19.) Yea and adding to thy other ſins that that makes thee equal with the chief ſinners, *viz.* oppoſition to Gods Wayes, Truths, and people, even to the Name of his only Son, called upon by them (as *Paul* tells us when he had reckoned up many great ſinners, as ungodly, unholy, prophane, murtherers of Fathers, murtherers of Mothers,

Where-

Whoremongers, defilers of themſelves with mankinde, Man-ſtealers, &c. for whom he ſayes Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave them; yet ſpeaking of himſelf that had been of the ſtraiteſt Sect of Religion among the Jews, and abhorred and hated thoſe groſſer wayes of ungodlineſs; yet becauſe he had in his ignorant zeal for God and his Church, and the Traditions of the Elders, blaſphemed Chriſt, and his Truth, and People, and been a perſecutor of, and injurious ro them: he ſtiles himſelf therefore *the chief of ſinners*, (as if a greater ſinner then thoſe Thieves, Whoremongers, and Murtherers before ſpoken of by him) thou I ſay art in as bad a condition as I poor prodigal was in before I repented, and how much worſe then now I am, in having repented; ſuch as are ſo far guilty themſelves (as the Phariſees more generally had a ſpice of that perſecuting ſpirit againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine) have I ſay no cauſe to murmur againſt Gods goodneſs to repentant ſinners, but had need rather to repent them with them that they might obtain like mercy alſo: as our Saviour implies that

that the Publicans and Harlots repentance, and being thereupon admitted into Gods Kingdom, and so into a state of *righteousnes, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* (Rom. 14. 17.) should have moved the Pharisees to repentance with them of their formal and pharisaical righteousnes, and other sinful evils found with them. To that purpose is what is written in *Matth.* 21. 31, 32. *Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you* (before you Pharisees, formal Professors, superstitiously righteous) *for John came unto you in the way of righteousnes, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and the Harlots believed him: and ye when ye had seen it, repented not that ye might believe.* I do not say then that all that murmur at Gods goodnes to repenting Sinners, are really righteous, and the Sons of God. No, the generality of the Scribes and Pharisees were not so, nor were the false Teachers and the Preachers up of Circumcision in the Primitive Churches such, who were greatly offended at the Gentiles finding such mercy as to be received in,

in

in their uncircumcision in the flesh, into the number of Gods Saints, and holy ones. The Apostle gives them other Characters, when he sayes, *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision*, Phil. 3. 2. and sayes of such, *That their end was destruction*, ver. 19. and that they were *false Apostles, deceitful workers, messengers, and Ministers of Sathan*, and the like, 2 *Cor.* 11. 13, 14, 15. But I say such as cleave to God their Father, and depart not from him in faith or life, that are ever with him, and have interest in all he hath, these are truly righteous persons through Christ in the main, though they also may possibly be sometimes leavened with the leaven of the Pharisees, their corrupt principles or wayes, if they take not heed thereof, as is implyed, *Matth.* 16. 6. they may have froward, sullen, peevish, and envious fits befal them: yea, and besides, our Saviour for better winning in the Pharisees, and taking off their prejudices, might (and I think did sometime) speak to them upon supposal of their being (what they judged themselves to be) truly righteous: as in *Matth.* 9. 13.

I

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

CHAP. V.

A three-fold state of men considered in the Text, The first, The state of righteous Walkers, in three Branches; the first Branch opened and applyed.

THE words then being thus explicated and cleared, as to the two Sons therein mentioned, let us go forward; and I observe in them a three-fold state or way of men here spoken to, which I shall desire a little briefly to consider as God shall assist therein.

1. The good state of truly righteous and obedient persons walking in the fear and obedience of the Lord; and that is set forth in the first Branch of the reply of the Father to his elder Son, *ver.* 31. *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*

2. The sad and deplorable state of persons departing and wandring from God in the wayes of sin, and that is im-

pliedly

pliedly contained in the latter expreſſions of the latter part of his reply, *viz.* in theſe words, *Thy Brother was dead, was loſt,*

3. The comfortable eſtate of ſuch wanderers returned to God by repentance, and that is ſignified in the whole latter part of the ſaid reply, *verſe* 32. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, he was loſt and is found.* Of theſe in order.

The firſt ſtate.

And firſt for the good eſtate of the obeyers and walkers with God, it is ſignified in a three-fold expreſſion, *viz.*

1. In the compellation, *Son.* They are the Sons of God.

2. In the firſt Branch of the aſſertion to him, *Thou art ever with me.* They are ever with God. And

3. In the latter Branch of it, *and all that I have is thine.* They have intereſt in all that is Gods. A happy portion, and ſuch, as one would think, if minded, might content any one, and preſerve them from envying at either the portion of the world, or the portion of, or Gods dealing with any

any of their Brethren. View we it in each of these Branches in order.

1 Branch.

First, They that abide with God, and depart not from him, but walk righteously before him, they are the Sons of God.

1. Men might be called the Sons of God by virtue of their Creation, in which they received their being of, and from God, much more then a childe his being from his Parents; and so (as we noted before) its said, *The Son of Adam, which was the Son of God*, Luke 3.38. and by the Poet recited and approved by the Apostle *Paul*, *Acts* 17.28, 29. *For we are also his off-spring*: from which the Apostle infers, *forasmuch then as we are the off-spring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like to Gold*, &c. For indeed God made man in his own Image and Likeness, and therefore also man resembling God in some respects, as the Son the Father, might there-from be called and accounted his Son. But that image and likeness (especially as to any holiness, purity, innocency, right knowledge, yea, or any right

right of dominion over the creatures, liberty of will, or the like) was wholly loſt in our departing from him, and ſinning againſt him, we being therethrough filled with the poiſon of ſin, the ſpawn and likeneſs of the Devil, the old Serpent, and inſlaved by, and to him, children of wrath, and heirs of deſtruction, though the *relation* of *creatures* abode ſtill, yet the *likeneſs* of *children* was *wholly loſt*, But,

2. God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son thereinto to be the Saviour of the world, and to that purpoſe made him of a woman, and under the Law, that he might bear our ſins in his own body on the Tree, and by giving himſelf a ranſome and ſacrifice to Juſtice for all men, as the Lamb of God, take away the ſin of the world, by bearing and ſatisfying for it in himſelf, and deſtroying by his death, him that had the power over death, even the Devil and his works (*Heb.* 2. 14. 1 *John* 3. 8.) might free us, or buy us from under his acquired juriſdiction and tyranny over us, and from the wrath and deſtruction due to us, into his own Diſpoſe, Lordſhip,

ſhip, and Juriſdiction, to be ruled over, and diſpoſed of by him, *John* 3. 16, 17. 1 *John* 4. 14. *Gal.* 4. 4, 5. 1 *Pet.* 2. 24. 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. *John* 1. 29. *Rom.* 14. 9. *For to this end he both died, roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord of both quick and dead.* Now in this that he became man, he took the man-hood into unity of perſon with himſelf, ſo as in him *Man* is become the *Son of God*, the only begotten Son of God, even the man Chriſt Jeſus, as he was alſo *mightily declared to be by the Spirit of Holineſs in the Reſurrection of the dead*, as it is ſaid, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, *Rom.* 1. 3, 4. *Acts* 13. 33. and in that he in that nature hath ſuffered for us (*the juſt for the unjuſt*) and is become the propitiation for our ſins, even for the ſins of the whole world, and hath received into himſelf the immeaſurable fulneſs of the Holy Spirit (ſo as he may communicate to us thereof, and Baptize us therewith) he hath opened a way for us loſt men to recover our nighneſs and likeneſs to God again, that we receiving remiſſion of ſins through his Blood, might be alſo adopted, and taken into the account

of

of his Sons, being begotten by him, through the revelation of his Son to us, and of the grace in and by him, to believe on his Son, and approach to, hope in, and worſhip him in and by his Son. Yea, and

3. Becauſe that man-hood which he purpoſed to cloath his Son with, that body he prepared for him, he choſe and took it of the ſeed of *Abraham*, *Iſaack*, and *Jacob*; therefore to their ſeed alſo he of his Grace and Favour gave the adoption of Sons, as it is ſaid of the Jews, *They are Iſraelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, the glory*, &c. Rom. 9. 4. when he is ſpeaking of *Iſrael* after the fleſh, and ſuch as for whom he *could have wiſhed himſelf accurſed*, and had *great heavineſs, and continual ſorrow in his heart*, through the conſideration of that ſtate of unbelief they then lay in: wherefore alſo of *Iſrael* it is ſaid, *Iſrael is my Son, my firſt-born; and I ſay unto thee, let my Son, my firſt-born go*, Exod. 4. 22. *His Son*, both becauſe Chriſt his Son (in reſpect of the fleſh he was to take) was in them, or ſome of them, and in reſpect of the knowledge of Chriſt

Christ they, the rest also, were called to; or also the Covenant (the substance of which was Christ; as it is said, *I have given him for a Covenant of the people*, Isa. 42. 6. and 49. 6 and 55. 3. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, the sure mercies of* David Which the Apostle interprets to be Christ risen again, *Acts.* 13. 34.) into which after a sort they were initiated and grafted by Circumcision *a seal of the righteousness of the faith that Abraham had; being yet uncircumcised*, as the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 4. 11. even the righteousness by the faith of Christ, through whom, and with respect to whom they were taken into Gods house, and accounted, and called his Sons, and Children, yea, and there abiding in subjection to his instructions they continued so; but many of them not understanding and walking in the Faith of *Abraham*, of the righteousness whereof Circumcision was the Seal, but resting short, or wandring out of it, yea, and opposing of it, they became so far from being the Sons of God, that they were by our Saviour, and *John* the Baptist, (*John* 8. 44.) rightly stiled,

Ser-

Serpents, a generation of Vipers, yea, the ſeed or children of the Devil, *Mat.* 3. 8. and 23. 33.

4. Yea, whereas God gave to that people, a holy and righteous Law, to convince them of ſin, and ſhew them their need of Chriſt, and the forgiveneſs of their ſins through him, and to ſignifie and ſhadow him out with the grace in and by him, that as by a Schoolmaſter they might be directed to him to ſeek him and righteouſneſs, and life in him: Whence it is ſaid, *Moſes wrote of him, and the Law witneſſed to the righteouſneſs of God, that is, by the faith of him*, Gal. 3. 23, 24, 25. John 5. 46. Rom. 3. 21. Many of them not underſtanding the Law, nor ſeeing to the *end* thereof (*which was Chriſt for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth*, Rom. 10. 4. being blinded by their unbelief, and liſtning to Satan, and cloſing their eyes and ſtopping their ears againſt Gods Doctrine, (who ſo ſpeaks of Chriſt in all his teachings, that whoſoever hears and learns of him, comes to him, *John* 6. 45.) reſted only in the Type, Shadow, and work of the Law, ſeeking righteouſneſs

ouſneſs as it were thereby, and not coming to Chriſt for life, nor ſubmitting to him as the righteouſneſs of God, but ſtumbling at him (*John* 5. 40. *Rom.* 10. 3.) yet theſe not ſeeing their ſinfulneſs, and the curſe they were under by the Law in all their works, but conceiting themſelves alive in the obſervations of it, took themſelves to be the Children of God, and are called in a ſenſe as the Children of God: either they or the Judaizing Chriſtians (which I think the likelier) being compared to one of the Sons of *Abraham*, who bare a kinde of Type or repreſentation of God in his two ſons. But theſe indeed are ſervants or ſuch ſons as *Iſhmael* (the Law gendring to bondage) and ſo bond-men, and not ſuch Sons as are ever with God, as a Son with his Father, but were to be caſt out, and are caſt out with their Mother that bare them from inheriting with thoſe that are indeed his Sons, as *Iſaac* was; and of this ſtamp too, are they that being ignorant and neglective of the Grace of God in Chriſt do live upon their duties and obſervances of outward ordinances under the Goſpel,

2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14, 15. and 4. 4. *Matth.* 13. 15. *Rom.* 9. 30, 31, 32. and 10. 3. *John* 8. 41. *Gal.* 4. 22, 30. *Luke* 18. 9, 11. and ſuch Sons the Phariſees might be. But,

5. They, and they only, that being Baptized into Chriſt, or initiated into him do put on Chriſt, or being called of God to him, do receive him, own, entertain, and believe in him; do by vertue of him, and in union with him, become the Sons of God (in the choice ſenſe of of it) and attain that dignity and priviledge ſo to be made and called, being in the gracious call of God to him overcoming them to receive and believe in him, born alſo of God, begotten of that immortal ſeed of his word, that lives and abides for ever; and in believing on Chriſt receive (by and through him) the ſpirit of Son-ſhip, even the Spirit of the Son, framing them to a child-like love to, and confidence in God, as their Father, and infuſing into them his Divine Nature; and ſo renewing them in (or in them) the Image of Chriſt Jeſus his only begotten Son, and making them like to him by degrees, *Who is the firſt-*

born

born amongſt many brethren, Rom. 8. 29. And now ſure they that being thus made Sons of God do alſo follow after, and are led by, and ſo retain the Spirit of the Son, are and muſt needs be the Sons of God, as it is ſaid, *To them that received Chriſt, to them he gave this priviledge to become the Sons of God, even to thoſe that believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, John 1. 12, 13. and *Ye are all the Sons of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. 4. 26. and *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteouſneſs* (namely in believing on him, and ſo being led by his Spirit) *is born of him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God*, 1 John 2. 29. and 3. 1. and *So many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*, Rom. 4. 14, 15. being thereby led into, and kept in union with, and dependence on the Son of God, and made like to him in conformity, in righteouſneſs, holineſs, *&c.* And indeed men being made the Sons of God by this divine regenerati-

on into, and in the Son of God and brought to God, what can unſon them again, if they abide and tarry with God, not departing from him? God who at ſo dear a rate, and in ſo great love hath made them his Sons, will not out of mutability of minde, unſon them again. *No, his gifts and calling are without repenting of them*, Rom. 11. 29. Sins and failings they may have, froward paſſions, and peeviſh diſtempers as other (mens) Sons and Children have and may have; and therefore as in their infancy and minority under the Law, they were under Tutors and Governors, to nurture and order them till the time appointed of the Father, *Gal.* 4. 1, 2, 3. So alſo ſtill they may need to feel the rod of their Father, (though no longer under the tutorage of *Moſes* Law as formerly) as it is ſaid, *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. and ſuch will be their ſtate while here, till they come to perfect age, *To the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, till they ſee him as he is; for then they ſhall be compleatly like him, and have nothing

thing more of ignorance, error, frowardneſs, or diſobedience in them, *Eph.* 4. 14. 1 *John* 3. 1, 2. but thoſe frailties and failings, peeviſhneſſes, and paſſions, do not unſon them, unleſs they wholly turn them out from Chriſt the Son, in whom they have their Son-ſhip, and are Sons. Indeed if any depart from him, ſo as to be aboliſhed from him, then they *fall from* that Grace and Favour in which the Believer and abider ſtands even from the Grace of Son-ſhip. *Chriſt ſhall profit them nothing*, Gal. 5. 2, 3. or as the Parable hath it, become Sons dead and loſt, that are as if they were not, and without a reviving periſh from Gods preſence; and if they may be called Sons, as *Abraham* calls the rich man in Hell his Son, they can have but only the title and the *quondam relation*; the nighneſs and priviledges of Sons with their Father, and in his houſe they can never obtain, when the gulf is fixt upon them for ever and ever; as the Parable hath it in *Luke* 16. 25, 26. But the walkers with God, the continuers in his Faith, Fear, and Service, muſt needs be his Sons, inaſmuch as they abide in

Christ his Son. Such the first Branch of this hapy state, they are Sons of God.

Use. 1.

And is this nothing, or is it but a small matter to be a Son of God? is it not a very spring, in and through Christ, of infinite and unspeakable hope and consolation? a Son of God, who is great in power, rich in glory, in mercy, in wisdom, in love and goodness, able to do all things, good to all, and his tender mercies, over all his works, bountiful to Servants that are but hirelings, and serve him only for their own interests and rewards, and may not abide in the house for ever, being not made Sons. *How many hired Servants* (saith the Prodigal) *are in my Fathers house, that have bread enough and to spare*, Luke 15. 17. Yea good to his enemies, loving them, and doing good to all; *making his Sun to shine, and rain to fall on the good, and on the bad, the unthankful and evil*, giving whole Lordships, yea, and Kingdoms of this world in his great bounty to them also, that regard him not but hate him; careful of the very inferiour creatures, feeding the Ravens, caring

ring for the Fowls of Heaven, even the little Sparrows, five of which are ſold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgot before him. Yea, *he giveth food to all fleſh, for his mercy endureth for ever.* If *David* counted it ſo great an honor and priviledge to be Son in Law to *Saul*, an earthly and mortal King, whoſe breath was in his noſtrils, and his power of narrow compaſs in compariſon of Gods (as well as his goodneſs) Oh what may not a ſoul promiſe it ſelf of felicity and happineſs in being the Son, the adopted and genuine Son of a King ſo great, ſo full, ſo good, ſo free, ſo liberal to, and careful of all, even of the worſt men and creatures, as God is? what cannot, what will not ſuch a Father do for his Children? eſpecially ſuch Children too, as obey and abide with him? Yea, what may they not upon that conſideration incourage themſelves to look for, and expect from him, having alſo ſuch an elder Brother with him as is infinitely perfect and dear to him to plead for them, and take away the defects and failings of their obedience towards him? ſhall he be good to

ſtrangers, provide for inferiour creatures, give large crumbs and offals to dogs, and birds, and beaſts; and will he not give what is convenient to his children? ſurely yes: Shall he give good things to his enemies, and neglect his children? ſurely no. Surely he hath far better things for them, then for any others not ſo near to him, nor in ſuch relation with him. It is our Saviours argument, *Conſider the fowls of the air, for they ſowe not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.* Mark the Emphaſis. Your Father, and therefore loves you: Your heavenly Father, who in that he is heavenly, is above all, and hath all power, and all creatures ſubject to him; and in that he is heavenly, is holy and pure from earthly affections, as covetouſneſs and other paſſions, which our earthly Fathers are bemudded with. He is your Father, your heavenly Father; yet he feeds them that are of no compare with him to you, and to whom he owns no ſuch relation: ſhall he feed them and neglect you? what earthly Father will do ſo, to feed his chickens,

and

and forget or famish his children? much less can or will your heavenly Father, *Matth.* 6. 26. and the like in *Matth.* 10. 29. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father*: as if he would say, doth he that is so nearly related, and dearly affected to you, who stiles himself your Father, and owns you as his Children, take such care of so inconsiderable a creature as a sparrow, two whereof are sold for a farthing, and who are so infinitely below him, that he stiles not himself in such a relation to them; and can he neglect you who are his Children, whom he hath so valued as to give a price greater then heaven and earth, even his own Son for you? *Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value* (namely with him) *then many sparrows.* This then is a relation estating in such a condition as affords exceeding ground of highest confidence, and greatest expectation in and through Christ (in whom he makes and takes us for his Children) of greatest advantages, and fullest happiness, and in the mean while of all that he that is

ſo great and good can do for us, and ſees good and meet to be done. *Behold then what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us* (who are in Chriſt Jeſus) *that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.* Surely its well worthy of our beholding, for there is in it to be ſeen heighth and ſtrength of love and affection, and matter of marvellous conſolation: and in beholding this we may

2. Behold alſo how infinitely we are ingaged to God, and to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to love and live to them, to honour and glorifie them; for what love was that, that led the Father to give his only begotten Son to be the Son of Man, and thereby expoſed to all the miſeries of man, yea, all that man by his ſin had deſerved as its juſt reward to be ſuſtained and born by him, that he might open the way from deſtruction, to ſuch an high priviledge as Son-ſhip to God by him, and make him the root of it for and to us, through what he hath done to him in the body he prepared and gave him? could it be leſs then infinite love in him that moved him to deſign ſuch *exaltation* of ſo *baſe and vile*

crea-

creatures as *we*, by the ſo *great abaſement* of one *ſo high* and *glorious as he*? and oh what love was that in Chriſt Jeſus, what grace, what pitty, what mercy and kindeneſs not to ſhrink back from the ſtate of ſervice to make us ſons; yea from the ſtate of ſin and death, *For he that knew no ſin, was made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*, and died for all, that through him we might attain ſuch dignity and glory as cannot be valued by us? how ſhould it engage our hearts and affections to him, and make us ready with all diligence to obey and live to him, that to ſuch, and ſo glorious an end died for us, and roſe again? *For he was made under the Law for ſuch as were under the Law* (as in a ſenſe all were, *Rom.* 3. 19.) *that we being redeemed from the Law, might receive the adoption of Sons*, Gal. 4. 4, 5.

2. Herein alſo we may ſee and be inſtructed into the way whereby ſinners may be made the Sons of God, even they that are not ſo, but are the children of wrath: For as Chriſt hath by his ſufferings opened and made the way for it,

ſo he thereby as raiſed from the dead, and taken up to glory in the nature of man, and owned as the Son of God, and glorified, is become the root of Son-ſhip unto us, as is ſaid; and therefore the way for us to be made the Sons of God, is to receive and cloſe with him the Son of God: as God is commending him and ſetting him forth to us by his Word and Spirit, ſo to be diligent to hear and learn of him, that being therein drawn, we may come to, and believe on him, who cannot of our ſelves come to him, nor have any way to be the Sons of God in truth, but in and by him received and believed on, as the Apoſtle *James* alſo inſtructs us; when having ſaid, *of his own good will begot he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kinde of firſt-fruits of his creatures to him*, James 1. 18, 19. Then he addes, *Let every one be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, and ſlow to wrath*; namely, that ſo he alſo may be begotten of him to like priviledges. In Gods drawing us then with the cords of love, and bands of a man, take heed of breaking his bands, and caſting his cords from us; of clo-

closing the eye, and stopping the ear, and hardening the heart, lest we should see with the eye, and hear with the ear, and be converted, and Christ should heal us, and advance us to so high favour and dignity, and so we deprive our selves thereof: but hear we his voice while its called to day, and yield we to his drawings of us, to believe in him; obey we and follow we after the Holy Spirit, sent forth in his Name, with his Word, and Doctrine to us, to convince us of sin, and glorifie him to us, that in obeying his voice, we may be led to him, and knowing his name through his light and teaching, we may by his renewing, quickning vertue be framed and strengthned to believe in him. *John* 6 45. and so being born of Water, and of the Spirit, may be made the Sons of God in him, *Phil.* 9. 10. *John* 3. 3.

3. Yea, what ground of content with our conditions may we here see, being brought into Christ, and made the Sons of God by faith in him? what cause or ground is there for such to envy or murmur at others for being high born, rich, honourable, or mighty in this world??

world? what's all the dignity and happineſs of the greateſt Princes Children, or of the wealthieſt and moſt potent Monarchs, in compariſon of the happineſs of thoſe that have God for their Father, and can truly ſay they are born of him? How poor and ſorry ſhadows are all titles, excellencies, and enjoyments to what this dignity admits to, and to the ſubſtance that is therein? ſhould a Princes Son envy another, becauſe he is Son to the Mayor of ſome decayed Corporation? or becauſe he wears a few glittering brazen Buttons, or ſilken Ribbands, when he happily hath none ſuch, but hath that that is ten thouſand times more precious on him? Nay not only no ground to envy ſinners, but none to envy any other Sons of God, or any of our Brethren; for what have they right to, but we have alſo the ſame, having one Father, and one infinite Inheritance in and with him, all in common; though we have not the ſame ſtature, the ſame employments, the ſame garb, yet we have the ſame rich, powerful, and loving Father, that is an impartial lover of his Children, and deſigns to make them

all

all his children in ſharing his Inheritance amongſt them, or rather making each of them heirs of the whole. ground here is of love rightly conſidered, but of envy and fretting for the Fathers now ſmiling upon one rather then upon another, none.

4. Yea, what folly and madneſs muſt they needs be guilty of, that having in and through Chriſt way made, and advantage afforded for attaining this dignity, either take up ſo much content in being the children of ſome mortal rich or great ones, or in having ſuch earthy eſtates, pleaſures, or fading enjoyments; or elſe are ſo taken up with care to get, and keep ſome earthy worldly things that will not either ſatisfie or ſave them, that they utterly neglect and trample under feet like Swine, or very luke-warmly and coldly ſeek after, and ſo miſs for want of more hearty ſeeking, ſuch a pearl of ſo infinite value as this is? as if there were more in being the Sons or Daughters of Gentlemen, Knights, or Princes, or more in a few periſhing riches, deceitful pleaſures, or empty titles, or honours, then in being the

Sons

Sons of the higheſt, and having his favour and affection placed for ever on us? Sure this is great folly and madneſs, and yet through the deceits of Sin and Satan it is moſt common.

5. And how might it provoke ſuch as are the Sons of God to cleave to, and tarry at home, as it were with him; and to that purpoſe to beware of accompanying themſelves with the world, or being unequally yoaked, and bound up with them, leſt they draw them into diſobedience and rebellion, and ſo to deprive themſelves of the love and friendſhip of ſo high a Father, and provoke his anger and diſpleaſure againſt them, but rather take the Apoſtles counſel and keep to it, to *Come out from amongſt the world, and be ſeparate to God* in Chriſt, and not *touch the unclean things*, the unclean principles or practices of the world, that ſo God may receive them, more and more, as his, and be their Father, and they may be to him as Sons and Daughters: *Yea, as obedient children not to faſhion themſelves to the luſts of their former ignorance, but as he that hath called us is holy to be holy in all manner of*

con-

converſation, 2 Corinth. 6. 14, 17, 18. 1 Pet. 1. 14, 15, 16, 17.

6. And it may provoke them to behave themſelves as the Sons of God, and ſo,

1. To be followers of God as dear children, imitating him in love, mercy, and goodneſs, as *Epheſ.* 4. 32 and 5. 1.

2. Seeking to honour God as their Father, in word and converſation, *Malachy* 1. 6.

3. And to that end, to live chearfully in God, not giving way to, or ſinking under cares and fears, *&c. Phil.* 4, 4, 5, 6. 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Luke* 12. 32.

4. Loving their Brethren as Sons of God alſo with them, *Epheſ.* 5. 1, 2.

5. Putting on, and wearing ſuch apparel as becomes ſuch high born perſons, *Putting on as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, bowels of mercy, meekneſs, humbleneſs of minde*, &c. Col. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

6. Living above the world, and the things of it, yea, contemning ſuch worldly luſts, and delights, as far below them, 1 *Pet.* 2 11. *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. And great is the advantage of being obedient

obedient children to God, and not running from him, but living as his children with him, as follows.

CHAP. VI.

The second Branch opened and applied.

THOU art ever with me. They that are obedient to God and Christ, and depart not away through pride and folly from him, have the advantage of being ever with him: For God doth not (as other Fathers sometimes do) send away his Children to live from him; they that forsake not him shall not be forsaken or thrust away by him. *They that come unto Christ*, and so unto God in Christ, *he will in no wise cast them away*, or lose them, *John* 6. 33. and 18. 9. Other Fathers that have divers Children must send some of them away, because they either want love for them all, or if not, yet have not alwayes room for them all in their Houses and Farms, or the like; but its not so with God, he hath room enough in his heart for them all,

all, and room, and bread, and proviſion enough in his houſe for them all too, and for more then all. The ſame love that led him to beget them through the painful ſufferings of his Son, and the troubleſome travels of his Soul, and by the powerful influences of his Spirit, leads him alſo to keep and look to them.

And thus they are in and by vertue of Chriſt, who is their Head, and in whom they are as Branches in the Stock or Root, *John* 15. 4. as members in the Head, or in union with it by Faith and Spirit, being in Chriſt they are in him ever with God; for he is ever with him in his preſence, in his boſom, at his right hand, in his power and authority, ruling and ordering all things, for, and over, and about them; and as the great High-Prieſt making interceſſion for them.

We were with God, even all men in our firſt Parents in the Garden of *Eden*, injoying intercourſe with him, till we in them offended, and ſinned, and then he juſtly caſt us out thence as unclean and naſty creatures, and baniſhed us from his preſence, ſetting a Cherubim, with a flaming

flaming Sword in his hand to keep us thence: yet not content to leave us ſo, in his pitty and mercy he deviſed a way, a new and living way, by which he might without violation to his truth and juſtice (which ſtood againſt us as in our ſelves become ſinners) admit us again into his preſence, and have intercourſe with us. To that purpoſe he ſent his Son into the world for us, and he became as a baniſhed perſon from his preſence for a time, crying out as forſaken of his Father; that ſo taking away the ſentence of baniſhment by ſatisfying the demands of Law and Juſtice in his own body for all men (as fallen in *Adam*, and therefore expelled from him) he might become himſelf the way of acceſs (the fiery flaming Sword in the hand of the Cherubim that was every way wielded againſt us, being removed by his being made under, and bearing the ſentence of the fiery Law for us) and by him now we may return to God again. *He hath ſuffered for us, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Pet. 3. 18. To which purpoſe being raiſed again, and become the mediator of God and us, he calls

calls us by him to himſelf; and though we are ſo unclean in our ſelves, that he can admit us to no immediate fellowſhip with himſelf, yet in and by him, *Who is the way, the truth, the life, the new and living way*, that makes alive and clean, righteous and holy, all that enter into, and walk in him, and ſo come unto God by him (he being *made to us of God, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, and Redemption*) there he can ſpeak to, and commune with us, from off that mercy-ſeat, and admit us to behold him, preſent our ſelves to and before him, and have moſt intimate and intire fellowſhip with him, and no way, or where elſe. By him, as the door and gate of life opened for all (though ſtrait to the fleſh, becauſe of its croſſneſs to its corrupt wiſdom, will, and affections, and becauſe of the many reproaches, perſecutions, and afflictions attending it, ſo as few finde and enter it) he invites all to return to God again, *Commanding all men* by the Goſpel *every where to repent*, Acts 17. 30: and ſending forth his Spirit with his calls, in which he ſtretcheth forth his hand and power, that thereby men might

might be inlivened, quickned, and ſtrengthned to approach to God by him. And through him by that one Spirit, all, whether Jews or Gentiles that liſten to, and cloſe with him, have acceſs, and come to the Father, ſo as they are *no longer ſtrangers, or forreigners, but fellow Citizens, with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*, Eph. 2. 17, 18, 19. Prov. 1. 23, 24, 32. and ſo being made the Sons of God in Chriſt, are alſo ever with him.

1. With him, on his ſide to take part with him, as in that ſenſe *Hezekiah* ſaith, 2 *Chron.* 32. 7, 8. *There be more with us then there are with him, with us the Lord our God.* And our Saviour ſaith, *He that is not againſt me is with me*, and *He that is not againſt us is with us*; but that is not ſo properly the ſenſe here. As,

2. With him, nigh to him, *A people near unto the Lord*, Pſal. 148. ult. *made nigh by the blood of Jeſus*, ſhed for, and ſprinkled on them, *Eph.* 2. 13. ſo nigh that he is within their call: when they cry and call to him he hears them. *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, to all*

that

that call upon him in truth, he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and he will save them, Psal. 145. 18, 19. within his view and favourable sight. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears open to their cries,* Psal. 34. 14. within his favourable reach or touch; so that he can as he pleases, and doth as need is, *uphold them when* they are like to fall, and gives them *with the right hand of his righteousness,* what he pleases: so nigh him as they may also *hear his voice, see his face, behold his fair beauty, take hold of his arm,* or his strength, *hold them by him, and lean upon him,* Psal. 94. 17, 18, 19. and 34. 24. and 63. 8. 2 Chron. 13. 18. and 16. 8. Isa. 27. 4.

3. With him, in fellowship with him, 1 *John* 2. 3. *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another,* verse 7. that is God with us, to take part with us in our sorrows, sufferings, services, *&c. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them, in his love and in his*

his pitty he redeemed them, he bare them, and carried them all the dayes of old, Isa. 63.9. and we with God to take part with him in his grace, strength, fulness, *taking hold of his strength*, Isa. 27.4. and *Being filled with his fulness*, Ephes. 3.19. yea, they dwell together in one house, Christ Jesus, *in whom all the fulness of the God-head dwelleth bodily*, and *in whom whoso* believeth, and in exercise of faith *eateth* or feeds upon him *dwells also*, Col. 2.9. John 6.56. eating, and drinking, and feasting together; for Christ is the bread of God, the meat or sacrifice offered to God, and accepted of him, with and through the vertues of whose sacrifice and sufferings, he is cheared and strengthned to forgive sins, to give grace and blessing, and to work all his works in and for us; as he also is the Vine, whose juyce chears the heart of God, as poured out in drink-offerings to him, and the heart of man as believed in by us; for God also sets him forth for us to feed upon, *His flesh as meat indeed, and his blood as drink indeed for us*; John 6.33.55. Judges 9.13. even as of old God had communion with

with his people in their Sacrifices, taking part by the Altar and Prieſts for himſelf, and giving part to the Sacrificers; ſo both God and his people feed together in Chriſt Jeſus: Yea God (the Father here) would have had his elder Son have come in and eat with him, and his other Son and Servants of the feaſt prepared, the fatted Calf; only the elder Sons own frowardneſs kept him out: and ſo he *is in bed with his children too*, ſometimes, as it is parabolically expreſſed, *Luke* 11. 7. while and they ſpiritually reſt, and repoſe together in Chriſt: Such in a ſort their fellowſhip with him, that obey and walk with him.

3. With him, ſo as in a ſenſe in him. *The Church of the Theſſalonians, that is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ. 1. 1. and 2 Theſſ. 1. 1. and *we are in him that is true*, 1 John 5. 20. in him, becauſe in Chriſt as to their hopes, heart, love, faith, life. *Our life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Col. 3. 3. in him, in his eye or view, *For the eye of the Lord is over the righteous*, and they are ever in his ſight, walking with, and before

fore him, as *Noah*, *Enoch*, *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1. They being his ſpiritual Houſe and Temple in Chriſt, what was ſaid by him of his Temple typically, is true ſpiritually, and more really as to them, *Mine eyes and my heart*, ſaith God, *ſhall be there perpetually*, 2 Chron. 7. 16. 1 Pet. 3. 12. in his hand, power, and diſpoſe, to order, hold, or uphold them, yea, to lead, guide, or carry them in his love, *All his Saints are in thine hand*, Deut. 33. 3. Pſal. 139. 9 in his minde and remembrance, *The Lord thinketh upon me*, ſaith Pſal. 40. 10 he *forgetteth not the cry of the humble*, Pſal. 9 12, yea, to that purpoſe they are *ingraven as on the palms of his hand, ſo as they are ever before him* in all his works, Iſa. 49. 15. and *ſet as a ſignet upon his arm*; yea, they are in his heart, his love, and choiceſt affection, *as a ſeal upon his heart*, Cant. 8. 6. his heart is ever upon them. *The Lord loveth the righteous*, Pſal. 146. 8. *His countenance doth behold the juſt*, his heart and eye is upon them for good, becauſe of Chriſt the well beloved of his ſoul; as found in him, *He loveth them with the love wherewith he loves him*, even with

with a love of delight and pleaſure taking, *John* 17. 23, 26. with 16. 28. *Pſal.* 33. 18. and 147. 11. and 149. 4.

4. With him they are as children with a loving, kinde, and careful Father, who hath all power and ſufficiency to help and ſuccour them; and therefore thence great advantages accrue to them, becauſe being with him, he is alſo with and for them: as is ſaid, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. *The Lord is with you while ye are with him, on his ſide*, and in his preſence, keeping at home with him; and this is through Chriſt, who is *Immanuel*, *God with us.* God and man in one perſon, and the Mediator and band of union between God and man, through him the Lord is with, that is, both on their ſide, and preſent with them, by his power, favour, and grace for their helpfulneſs, whence they have cauſe of greateſt ſecurity in him, greateſt quietneſs and confidence; as appears from that ſong of the Virgin Souls, *Pſal.* 46. *The Lord of Hoſts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge*; as the burthen of the Song: and that was the ſpring of their rejoycing, gladneſs, and fear-exceeding-confidence, ex-

preſſed by them, *verſe* 2, 3, 4. *Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be caſt into the depths of the Sea*, &c. For from hence they may be ſure of.

1. His defence. He being infinite both in power, goodneſs, and faithfulneſs; and being immutable and eternal in what he is: and he having ſaid and promiſed that he will take the care of, and defend them that are with and obey him: *For on all the glory ſhall be a defence*, Iſa. 4. 5. *The Lord God is a Sun, and a Shield, and he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Pſal. 84. 11. Thence *let all that truſt in thee rejoyce. for thou wilt defend them; with favour wilt thou compaſs them, as with a ſhield*, Pſal. 5. 11, 12. And thence that glorying, *The Lord is our defence, the holy one of Iſrael is our King*, Pſal. 89. 18. and *who can harm them* that are with God, as their Father, and have him with, and nigh to them to defend them, as in 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. yea, they have his defence both.

1. By his Word and his Spirit therein, yea, his only Son, pleading for, and juſtifying

ſtifying them. *He is near that juſtifieth me, who will contend with me; let us ſtand together*, Iſa. 50. 7, 8. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect* (thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus, walking not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit; to whom there is no condemnation from God) *It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died, yea, rather is riſen again*, &c. Romans 8. 1, 33, 34.

2. By his truth and faithfulneſs, love and favour, covering them over as wings and feathers, as an Hen her Chickens: *I will ſay of the Lord, He is my refuge, my fortreſs, my God in whom I will truſt*, ſayes Pſal. 91. 2. as one reſolving to dwell in Gods ſecret place, his Chriſt, his Covenant; and then ſaith his Holy Spirit to ſuch, *He that ſo doth, ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty; and ſurely he ſhall deliver thee from the ſnare of the Fowler, and from the noyſome Peſtilence: He ſhall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings ſhalt thou truſt: his truth ſhall be thy ſhield and buckler*, ver. 1, 3, 4, 5, and *With favour will he compaſs them as with a ſhield*, Pſal. 5. 12.

3. By his *right hand*, which doth valiantly, and brings great things to pass, by that *he saveth them that trust in him*, Psal. 17. 7. even by his glorious power and providence graciously exercised over them, for and about them, and holding them from falling; and all these together in one, in Christ Jesus our Lord, *Ephes.* 1 19, 20.

2. His counsel, they may certainly expect that also; for he is nigh to them, to teach and instruct them in the way wherein they should go, and being their Father, will not withhold it from them, they asking it of him, and waiting upon him for it: as it is said, *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel*, and that as a consequent of Gods being with him, and he with him; for so it is said, *Psal.* 73. 22, 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou holdest me by my right hand. Thou shalt (or wilt) guide me by thy counsel*, &c. So also in *Psal.* 25. 12. *Who is the man that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach the way that he shall chuse*: and again, *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go, I will guide thee with my eye*, &c. *Psal.* 32. 8.

and

and again, *In all thy wayes acknowledge the Lord, and he ſhall direct thy paths*, Prov. 3. 6. and this alſo is an exceeding benefit and advantage, we being childiſh, fooliſh, and apt to miſtake in our wayes, deſigns, and undertakings; and of our ſelves to chuſe what would hurt us.

3. His help and aſſiſtance in all ſervices and difficulties. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee: ſo that we may boldly ſay* (infers the Apoſtle from thence) *the Lord is my helper*, &c. Heb. 13. 5, 6. A mighty powerful helper, being God Almighty, and of his help his obedient Children may be ſecure, through Jeſus Chriſt, covering the imperfections of their obedience, and pleading for them, for help for them, becauſe he is their loving merciful Father: and he helps,

1. By his Word and Spirit, therein incouraging them to, and in their ſervices, and ſufferings, to do and bear what he calls, and leads them to, and that's a good help in any work or combat to have a loving Father, and one of authority and power, ſtanding by us,

and heartning of us as it were, countenancing us by his presence, and speaking comfortably to us: and so doth God to his obedient Children, as we finde him to *Israel*, *Deut.* 31. 3, 4, 6. *The Lord will go over before thee, and destroy these Nations from before thee. Be strong, and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God he it is that doth go with thee, he will not leave thee nor forsake thee.* So also to *Joshuah* he himself saith the like, *Josh.* 1. 6. 7. *Be strong, and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide the land for an inheritance*, &c. *Have not I commanded thee. Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whither soever thou goest*, ver. 9. And we may see the like to *Gideon*, in *Judg.* 6. 14. 16. and to *Jeremy*, *Jer.* 1. 7, 8. and to *Ezekiel*, *chap.* 2. 6, 7. and 3. 8, 9. and in a word to all that wait on, and hope in him, as *Psal.* 27. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen thine heart; wait I say on the Lord*, and Psal. 31. 24. *Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen your hearts,*

hearts all ye that hope in the Lord: so also in *Isa.* 41. 10, 14. *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness: fear not thou worm Jacob.* Yea, he will have his Servants also to incourage them, as in *Isa.* 35. 4. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong,* &c. and so he comforts them in their griefs, *John* 14. 16 17.

2. By his Word and Spirit, putting in strength into them both for doing and suffering his will and pleasure, as *Psal.* 138. 3. *In the day that I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthnedst me with strength in my soul.* So God dealt with *Daniel, chap.* 10. 18, 19. *One like the appearance of the Son of man* (Christ) *touched him and strengthned him, and said, O man greatly beloved* (or man of desires) *fear not, peace be to thee, be strong, yea, be strong; and when he had spoken unto me* (saith *Daniel*) *I was strengthned, and said, Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthned me:* and so the Apostle *Paul* saith, *I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheth me,* Phil. 4. 13.

3. By his hand and power, the force of his Grace and Spirit, or also the operations of his providence working with them, and doing their work for them, and therein helping them, both

1: In carrying on their work and business, as 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I but the grace of God, that was with me:* and so he answered *Paul* in his temptations, and under the feelings of the buffetings of the messenger of Satan, desiring to be freed of them, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made manifest in weakness*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. His right hand also and glorious power fought for *Israel*, against their enemies, brought them in, and planted them in the land of promise, *For they got not the Land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but Gods right hand and his arm, &c. Psal.* 44. 3. *Acts* 23. 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, &c. and he helped *Paul* not only by incouraging him, and strengthning his soul, but also in ordering by his providence, that his Sisters Son should hear of, and discover the plot of those that conspired against him

him, and moved the chief Captains heart to secure him from them.

2. In keeping off, and obstructing what might obstruct their work, or oppress or overwhelm them in their suffering: as in the now mentioned instance is also to be seen; and so also it is said, *The wicked watcheth* [illegible] *and seeketh to slay him, but the Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged,* Psal. 37. 32, 33. and, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou wilt restrain. He will cut off the spirit* (or anger) *of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the earth,* Psal. 76. 10, 12. So *he suffered no man to harm the* Patriarchs, *he rebuked Kings for their sakes,* dried up the Sea, and cut off the waters of *Jordan* before his people, and many the like.

4. His care and providence, *for the Children lay not up for the Fathers, but the Fathers for their Children:* and he being both a great and good Father, and they being with him, on his side, and at home with him, he will take care of them, as a Father of his obedient Children: Whence it is said, *Let your moderation*

ration be known to all men, the Lord is at hand: In nothing be careful, but in all things, make known your requests to him by prayers and supplications, with thanksgivings, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts through Christ Jesus, Phil. 4. 6, 7. And again, *cast thy burthen upon the Lord, he will sustain thee.* Psal. 55. 22. And *Cast all your care on the Lord, for he careth for you,* 1 Pet. 5. 7. And *the Lord is my shepheard, I shall want nothing; he makes me lie down in green pastures, and leads me by the still waters,* &c. Psal. 23. 1, 2. Yea, *He is a Sun, and shield, and will give grace and glory, and with-holds no good thing from them that are upright with him.*

5. His infinite sweetness, satisfactions, joy, and pleasures; for *in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore:* therefore it is also said, *O how excellent is thy loving kindeness, O Lord, therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings, they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures,*

for

for with thee is the fountain of life, Pſal. 16. 11. and 36. 8, 9. See alſo, *Pſal.* 65. 4, 5. though the dimneſs of our ſight, and the vail that is over our eyes, hinders our full ſight and knowledge of him, and ſo deprives us while here, of that fulneſs of ſatisfaction that is in him.

Object. But ſome may ſay, Oh, but we ſee Gods people fall into troubles and wants oftentimes; what meant *Aſaph* elſe to complain that he was plagued all the day long, and chaſtned every morning; and yet he was one that cleanſed his heart, and waſhed his hands in innocency: as *Pſal.* 73. 13, 14. tells us. And did not *Lazarus* beg at the rich mans door, though afterward carried into *Abrahams* boſom, *Luke* 16. and are they not often *poor in this world, that are rich in faith?* James 2. 5.

Anſw. True, but yet in all this God defends and helps them, and they want no good thing, nor ſuſtain any evil, that walk uprightly with him: for as,

1. Oftentimes his children that ſuſtain ſuch things bring it upon them by departing from him, running themſelves into

into miſchief, and miſery, as the prodigal, and then they may fault themſelves; and the caſe is not the ſame we ſpeak of. So,

2. When ſuch things befal upright and obedient ones, it is but for tryal of them, their faith, patience, ſubmiſſion, love, and other vertues; and for the exerciſe of them, *that they might be intire and want nothing*, James 1.2.3, 4. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8. and then in theſe things alſo they prove and try the faithfulneſs of God, and finde him nigh to them, to defend, counſel, incourage, help, ſupply, and ſatisfie them with himſelf. Yea,

3. Theſe are of thoſe things that he ſees good, and not hurtful for them; and therefore alſo in love and faithfulneſs to them, orders to befal them, as means of brighting, purifying, and profiting them many wayes, as *Pſal.* 119.74, 75. *Prov.* 3. 11, 12. *Heb.* 12.6.7. As it is ſaid, *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away their ſin.* Iſa. 27. 8, 9. And the Apoſtle ſaith in theſe chaſtiſements, *He doth all things for our profit, that we might be made partakers of his holineſs*, Hebrews

brews 12. 10. So that as washing is sometimes needful for the best Linnens, and the Plough and Harrow for the best Earth, and the fining Pot for the best Silver, and the Furnace for the choice Gold, and the Flail and Fan for the best Corn, and the Rod for the best Children; so are these tryals for Gods best Children here: yea, the Lord himself in whom was no sin, went not unto his Glory, but throngh sufferings; in which he never fails his obedient ones, nor suffers them to miscarry.

Object. 2. But do not such holy ones also sometimes complain that God is far from them, though they walk with him, as *Psal.* 10. 1. and 22. 12.

Answ. Even from such he may seem to their senses to be far off sometimes, when as yet in truth he is nigh to them; as when Christ complained that he was forsaken of his Father, yet even then he upheld him. Compare *Psal.* 22. 1: with *Isa.* 42. 1. As sometimes the indulgent Mother, to try the Childes behaviour; and how it will look for, and prize her presence, will hide her self behinde the Wall, or Curtain; and while

the

the Childe calls, and cryes, and seeks her, and yet neither can see nor hear her, he concludes she is gone away, and is at a great distance; when yet all the time perhaps she is both within the sight, and hearing, and reach of her Childe; and though she try it, will suffer it to take no harm: even so God *is a God that sometimes hides himself*, and yet even then *is the God of Israel and his Saviour nigh at hand to all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth*, and in his due time discovers his nighness also, *Isa.* 45. 15, 17. *Psal.* 34. 17. 18. and 145. 18, 19.

Use. 1.

This truth thus cleared, then represents it an excellent thing to be a dutiful and obedient childe of God, and not depart from, or rebel against him; seeing all that are dutiful are so with him, nigh to him, have fellowship with him, are in him even in his arms and bosom, in his choice love and affections; and he nigh to them in all they stand in need of, and call upon him for, to protect, counsel, incourage, help, care for, and satisfie them, who can express how rich a vein

this

this is of ſtrong comfort and conſolati-on, if minded by them, and they judge not after ſenſe and fleſh, but faith and ſpirit therein? Oh what a ground of peace, ſecurity, and tranquility of ſpirit is this where enjoyed and minded; how indeed may they worthily let their moderation in their deſires, cares, fears, griefs, appear to all men, ſeeing they have God ſo nigh them? and how well may they be without carefulneſs, and be filled with peace and confidence, being with ſuch a Father, and ever too with him? *Phil.* 4. 5, 6, 7. What cauſe have they of diſcontent or frowardneſs, and fretting at the worlds portion, that are ſtrangers from God, and in their fulneſs, otherwiſe have not him with them, nor are they with him, but againſt, and far from him. Alas, their portion is ſad, *For all they that be far from him ſhall periſh, and he will deſtroy all that go a whoring from him*, Pſal. 73. 27. either in mercy as to their peace, comforts, deſigns, delights here, that they might not reſt content in them, but ſeek him and his name, that they might have him for their portion to delight in; or elſe if

that

that will not do it, but they yet perſiſt in their whoredoms from him, deſtroy them in fury, in and with their ſins for ever: and then as the Pſalmiſt notes, how ſad is their portion, *They are ſet in ſlippery places, and God caſts them them down* from all their riches, pomp, dignity *into deſtruction*: and then *how are they brought into deſolation, as in a moment: they are utterly conſumed with terrors*; but *great peace have they that love Gods law, and nothing ſhall offend them*: minding the happineſs of their condition they need envy none, no nor any of their brethren, becauſe of any parts, or gifts, or places, in which they may have more then they; for they have their Father alwayes nigh them, and their nighneſs to him is alwayes for good, for the chiefeſt good to them, through Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe blood cleanſeth them from all ſin. Indeed *there is not a juſt man upon earth that doth good and ſinneth not.* The beſt have their paſſions and their affections apt to be diſordered; their mixtures, their miſtakes, their failings; ſo that ſhould God enter into judgement with them, they could not ſtand before him;

him, their being nigh or with him, would be as the nighneſs of ſtraw to a conſuming fire: but therefore God hath interpoſed his bleſſed Son in his bleſſed Body, and the vertues of his perfect obedience and righteouſneſs between him and them: and his blood alwayes cleanſing their ſpots off, preſerveth them, that they enjoy fellowſhip with him, and may (as the Children of *Iſrael*, *Exod.* 24, 10, 11.) *See the God of Iſrael*, behold his glory with open face, as in a glaſs, though *it be in their ſight as devouring fire in the top of the Mount*, ver. 17. *Yet they may eat and drink in his preſence, and be not lay his hand upon any of thoſe noble, free, and ingenuous children in the leaſt to harm them*, but *only as he did upon Moſes* while he paſſed by him, *Exod.* 33. 21, 22, 23. *To cover and hide them* from any harm that might be ſuſtained from him.

Uſe 2.

And ſeeing this is ſo excellent a condition how ſhould it preſs,

1. All to ſeek the Lord, and not to reſt in any enjoyments of the world, nor in any gifts or attainments from the Lord

Lord without, and apart from the Lord himself; but seek that they may be born to him of the knowledge of him in Jesus Christ, and be brought back in their spirit to him, and be with him, and not love to live far from him in a poor, worldly, sensual, perishing condition: but alas, none understand, nor will believe the graciousness of the Lord, and the goodness of being with him, of dwelling in his House and Courts, in the knowledge and faith of his Son, and in unity with those that fear him: but generally through the lyes and deceits of Sin and Satan, harbour strange, uncouth, and hard thoughts of him, as if he was such a devouring fire, and so barren of any comfort, content, or satisfactions; because not allowing, but reproving those dirty pleasures of this world and sin, that they desire not the knowledge of him, nor care how little they come near him, or he to them: so strangely are mens fancies, mindes, and hearts possessed of evil prejudices against him, and thoughts of him, as if he and his company, presence, and wayes, were the worst in the world, no delight, no

goodness

goodneſs in them, becauſe too holy and ſtrict (we think) for us ſinful men: So that while men are ſeeking after worldly good things, riches, honours, friends, pleaſures, any thing, they neglect God as the only evil thing, *Job* 35. 9, 10. *Say not, where is God our maker that gave us ſongs in the night.* Yea, while they cry out of oppreſſions and injuries, they will every one *ſeek the rulers face*, and run hither and thither, any whither for ſhelter, but *to God*, or *Chriſt they will not come*; for *there is none that underſtandeth*; and that's the reaſon that as follows, *there is none ſeeketh after God*, Rom. 3. 12. Men carry towards him and his preſence, as the Jews did towards Chriſt, who was God manifeſted in the fleſh, *They ſee no form nor beauty, wherefore they ſhould deſire him*, Iſa. 53. 2. Therefore they thruſt him as a poor deſpicable infant, *into the ſtable, afforded him no room in the Inne*: nay, becauſe they ſuſpected He would lay claim to their Power, Kingdom, and enjoyments, and deprive them of the pleaſures, honours, and ſweetneſſes of them, they ſought betimes to kill him; and as he grew up,

and

and was made more manifeſt amongſt them, the more they hated him, and the worſe they uſed him, thruſt him out of their Synagogues; all to reviled and aſperſt him, hated and rejected him as the worſt of enemies to them, and deſired not to come to him to have life by him; they would rather periſh then have it there: even ſo do men do to God, and the knowledge and Spirit of him; they take no pleaſure therein, but hate and thruſt it from them, as moſt deſtructive to their welfare and happineſs: as if the knowing and ſerving him, and being alwayes as before him in his fear and preſence, could not conſiſt with reſt, peace, mirth, gladneſs, pleaſure, and ſatisfaction, but would rob us of them all. *Oh filthy creature man, that drinks in iniquity like water:* like ſome fooliſh naughty Childe that loves to rake in the dunghils, and wallow with dogs in the duſt, and with ſwine in the mire; and ſo loves them, as that becauſe the being with his Father in the houſe, though in his beſt dining rooms, would draw him off from thoſe dirty ſports and enjoyments, therefore hates to come home, or abide in the

houſe

houſe with him; nay, kicks, and flings, and cryes, and ſcratches, and bites, and fights with any body that would pull him out of a mudge pit which would ſoon choke him, to bring him to be in the houſe with his Father that loves him, and would give him of the beſt Wine and ſweeteſt Cates in his houſe: Such the carriage of the world toward Chriſt and God. But as the Diſciples of Chriſt being taught of God, came to him, and converſe with him, *Saw his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and counted all things loſs and dung for him, and the excellency of the knowledge of him*, and would rather part with all things then with him, they found ſuch precioufneſs in him: even ſo they that know God in and throngh him, and are acquainted in their hearts and ſpirits with him, they finde him in a meaſure, the immeaſurable fountain of light and delight, the ſweeteſt content and ſatisfaction. *A fountain of living waters*, in comparifon of whom all other enjoyments are but muddy pits, and *broken Ciſterns*; and they call to all. *Oh taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious*,

bleſ-

bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him, He that hath an ear let him liſten to this call.

2. All that do believe in Chriſt, and do follow after righteouſneſs, and ſeek or know the Lord, to abide with him, and not run from him; to follow after any other ſight, object, or allurement, that ſin or Satan may make uſe of to allure them from him, ſeeing its ſo bleſſed a thing to be with him. *Oh love the Lord, all ye his Saints, for he preſerveth the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer.* Even rewards them with anger, the bitter fruits of their folly, who proudly ſlight or depart from him, or hate and perſecute him, and them that love and cleave to him. *Bleſſed are they that dwell in his houſe, and enjoy* nighneſs to him, and are with him, *for they are,* and will be *ſtill continually praiſing him, and bleſſed are they that minde the way thereto, for they ſhall go from ſtrength to ſtrength, till every of them appear before God in Sion. O how beautiful and amiable his Tabernacles.* What ſight of his fair beauty is to be ſeen therein? what ſweetneſs to be taſted? what ſafety and peace to be enjoyed? Sure its better to be *One day*

day in the courts of the Lord, then a thouſand dayes elſewhere. Even in fellowſhip and communion with the Lord under the ſhinings, and in the light of his countenance, *For the Lord God is a ſun and a ſhield.* But oh then, who would run from him but one day to want the beauty and pleaſures, ſafety and ſatisfactions of his preſence, and nighneſs with him? who then would venture from him weeks and months to trade in ſin and defilement? nay, nor for an hour, ſeeing *He that wandereth from* (him, and ſo from) *his place is like a bird that wandreth from her neſt.* He knows not what may befal before he returns again, whether he may not be choaked with ſome bait, intangled in ſome net, ſhot with ſome bullet, ſo as never to return, *Prov.* 27. 9. *Good therefore to draw nigh to God,* and *to cleave to him with purpoſe and reſolution of heart,* never to go from him, no not for a moment, ſo as to leave or ſin againſt him.

We might diſtinguiſh between the being ever with God now, and the being ever with him hereafter; though both are the portion of his obedient children.

Men

Men may be ever, that is, perpetually with him; now as a Son that ſerves his Father, and dwells with him, who is ſaid to be ever with him, becauſe alwayes retaining to his houſe, as his abiding reſident place, though not alwayes in the houſe (as the Son was not now, but without in the Fields, in the employments and ſervices of his Father abroad, or taking therein his recreation) and ſo not alwayes beholding his face, ſeeing his preſence, and converſing actually with him. But the being with him hereafter ſhall be ſuch a being with him, as never to be looking off him, or out of the view of his glorious preſence, and that with eyes more unvailed, and apprehenſive then now we can have while in earthy tabernacles. But I ſhall paſs it, (the reader may ſee the difference in 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 12.) and ſo I come to the laſt clauſe, in which the graciouſneſs of the Lord to his obeying children, and the happineſs of their obedience and abiding with him is expreſſed, *viz.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The third Branch opened and applyed.

AND *all that I have is thine.* Oh wonderful word! Oh free hearted bountiful Father! who can comprehend this expreſſion? all that I have is thine? if we conſider whoſe ſaying it is, and to whom, we may admire it; but we cannot fathom it? Its the ſaying of a rich Father to a dutiful ſon, but at preſent diſcontented and undutiful. That the Father was rich, the Robes in his Wardrobe, and the furniture he afforded his returning Prodigal, and the feaſt *he* made for him with a fatted Calf, imply, a Lord he was at leaſt, and all that he had was a great deal. He had, no queſtion, Towns, and Cities, Caſtles, and Palaces, Farms, and Fields, Mannors, and Manſions, ſtately Buildings, and coſtly Furnitures, Silver and Gold, Corn and Cattle, great Wealth and Subſtance, though the Elder Son in his froward fit, ſaith, his other

Son had devoured his living, it was but peevishly spoken. He had livelihood enough yet left for them, and never the less for what he had spent him: and yet behold how he loves his Son, and with what argument (able one would think to have prevented his frowardness, or upon mention of it, to buy him out of it, but that sin is unreasonably sinful) he perswades him, *All that I have is thine.* What's one fatted Calf (and that not fatted for him, but only killed for him, it seems it was fatted before) to all the Estate, a vast Inheritance? I am sure he whom it represents here is no mean person; for the Father here, as we have noted, signifies God: And who can comprehend his riches, and yet, saith he to his abiding Son, *All that I have is thine.* All that God hath, who can express it? God hath himself, he perfectly enjoyes himself, and in himself hath infinite Wisdom, infinite Power, infinite Holiness, infinite Truth, infinite Glory, infinite fulness and satisfaction. He hath Christ his only begotten Son One with him, and in him is infinite Worth and Preciousness, infinite Power, Wisdom,

dom, Fulneſs, Goodneſs, &c. An infinitely precious Sacrifice, and oblation which prevails with God, to whatever it turns it ſelf, and able to prevail with men that receive it, and underſtand the worth and preciouſneſs of it: He hath him with him, and in him, his King, his Prieſt, his Prophet, his Holy One, &c. And he hath an infinitely Wiſe, Holy, Powerful, Eternal, Gracious Spirit; an innumerable company of Bleſſed Angels, as miniſtring Spirits, to attend upon him, and obey his commands. Yea, the whole world, and all the creatures in it, both in Heaven and Earth are his: yea, Hell and the Devils are his alſo; his Priſon for Offenders, and Executioners of his Vengeance: the Heaven and all its Hoſts, the Earth and all its Fulneſs, the Sea and all that paſſeth through the Waves of it. Who can reckon up, and much leſs value his immeaſurable riches? yet, *All that I have is thine*, all theirs, that being begotten of him, obey and ſerve him; and this propoſed to a froward Son to allay and take away his envious paſſion: And this Son a man, not an Angel, not the only begotten

Son, but poor earthy man, whoſe original is duſt, and who after a little while ſhall return to duſt again. Well may we cry out with *David* in admiration hereof, *Lord what is man that thou takeſt knowledge of him, and the Son of man that thou makeſt account of him?* man *is like to vanity, his dayes are like a ſhadow.* It can proceed from no intrinſick goodneſs of his, nor deſert by him, but from an infinite inexpreſſible love in God towards him. And *David* ſpake that there upon a like conſideration with this; for he had ſaid before, *Bleſſed be the Lord my ſtrength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; my goodneſs and my fortreſs, my high tower, and my deliverer, my ſhield, and he in whom I truſt, who ſubdueth my people under me.* God was all this to him, and did all this for him, that made him ſo cry out, *Lord what is man?* Pſal. 144. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Man hath nothing of his own, no not ſo much as his naked being of himſelf, *For he hath made us, and not we our ſelves* (or his we are) *we are the people of his paſture, and the ſheep of his hands.* When he came firſt into the world by Gods

Gods creating him he came *naked* into it, and had nothing that by any right and title as from himſelf he could call his. But ſuch Gods bounty that he had prepared a ſtately and well furniſhed world for him before he made him, and when he had made him, gave it all to him, that he ſubordinately to his word, ſhould be the Lord thereof, and have rule and dominion over all therein: yea, and endowed him with rich and precious indowments of his ſoul: for he inſtampt his image upon him, and ſo by his favour and goodneſs he was a rich creature, and in honour with him.

But man being in honour did not conſider, ſo as to reſiſt the temptation of the wicked one, but being drawn by him into rebellion againſt his Maker, becauſe he forbad him the taſting of one Tree planted in the pleaſurable Garden, into which he put him, he forfeited all that God beſtowed upon him; yea, both mental and bodily endowments of excellency; nay, his very life and being, and all the whole Creation given him, and deſerved to have been thruſt back into his own nothing again; or rather

with the Serpent into Hell and deſtruction far worſe then nothing. Poor man!

But oh the riches of the mercy of the Lord that was not well pleaſed to ſee his creature, man, ſo poor, but deviſed a way how to ſet him up and inrich him again, and to that purpoſe ſent forth his rich Son, the Lord in heaven, the maker and heir of all things, and by making him one with the nature of man, made him in the poverty of man, that by laying down his infinite riches for man as a price of his redemption; yea, his rich and precious life, as man, he might redeem man, and inrich him again, and ſo it is ſaid, *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* (one with his Father, complying with and yielding to him in that deſign) *that he being rich, became poor for your ſakes, that ye through his poverty might be made rich*, 2 Cor. 8 9. But how,

1. He that made himſelf, or became poor in man, made man, even the manhood in himſelf, the man Chriſt Jeſus, infinitely rich in God, by ſo great a price as ſo impoveriſhed him, having ſatisfied Juſtice,

Juſtice, fulfilled Truth, paid the Debt of Man, overcame and got the better of what impoveriſhed him; having wrought himſelf out of it as it were, and being raiſed again he was taken up to the Throne of God, and accounted of God his Father, as he is alſo judged to be by Men and Angels, worthy to receive and be filled with the unſearchable riches of God: So in *Rev.* 5. 11, 12. The Angels about the Throne with the Beaſts and Elders, pronounce, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing:* Yea, God and all his fulneſs is given wholly to him, *All the fulneſs of the God-head dwells bodily in him. The Father is in him, and he in the Father*, his God, his Father, *the Spirit is upon him*, his Spirit, the Spirit of Chriſt, *The Angels of God miniſter to him*, and attend upon him, *his Angels*, and *the Angels of his might*, *Heaven is his Throne*, yea, *the heaven and heaven of heavens is the Lords*, and the *earth is his too, and all the fulneſs thereof*, *the world*, *and all that dwell therein*, yea, *all power in heaven and upon the earth is given to him*,

Mat. 28. 19. *The Father hath loved the Son, and given him all things*, John 3. 35. So that here we may say in the first place now; *Lord what is man that thou takest knowledge of him*, and *the Son of man that thou makest such account of him*: and so the Apostle applies it, *Heb.* 2. 6, 7, 8. And so here in the first place, as in the root and foundation, all that God hath is mans, and man is ever with him, the Son of God.

2. Through him God makes known himself to other men, for he is *the light of the world, the true light, enlightening every one coming thereinto*: and as God hath done all that he hath done to him, in abasing and glorifying him for mans sake, and out of love and pitty to man, and desire of his good (Oh the riches of his love and mercy to fallen man! *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*, and *herein is love, not that we loved God*, but *that he loved us, and sent his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins*, John 3. 16. 1 John 4. 10.) So he hath in him thus inriched and glorified (having by his death and sufferings ransomed man from death and destruction

ſtruction into his diſpoſe) wonderfully provided for man, even prepared all this infinite fulneſs in his Son as God-man; as an infinite treaſury for the inriching of man, for the Grace, the remiſſion of Sins, the redemption from Thrall, the fulneſs of Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings in him, and poſſeſſion given him, it is for us men, and for our Salvation and inriching, but ſo to be enjoyed as only in and with him, to whom therefore God calls and draws men (both by the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, leading men to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4 5. and by the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, as preached in the Goſpel to men) inviting and alluring them to him that they might be ſaved by him, and inriched with him, *Epheſ.* 3. 8. with *Rom.* 1 16. 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. 2 *Cor.* 8, 9. and they that hereby are begotten to receive him, and knowing his name, truſt in him, as they in and through him receive the priviledge of Sons; ſo being made in him, *the ſons of God*, they alſo by vertue of him, and in him become *the heirs of God* (both as their Father; and as their In-

heritance) *joynt heirs with Christ*, ſayes, Rom. 8. 16, 17. for *as the Father hath loved the Son, ſo he again loves his Diſciples that believe in and follow him*, and makes and owns them as his Friends and Brethren. And as God gave him all things that were and are his, ſo he again gives all his things (and they are all things) to his brethren. *All things are yours*, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. and ſo the *beggars are lifted out of the duſt* again, and the *needy from the dunghil, and ſet upon the throne with Princes*, not the Princes of this world, who periſh, but which is far more excellent with the Princes of his people, whoſe Kingdom ſhall endure for ever, *James* 2. 5 *Pſal.* 113. 7, 8. praiſed be the Lord; though oftentimes they be in appearance as Princes diſguiſed in Beggars habit and ſtate *as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*, 2. Cor. 6. 10. *going on foot while ſervants* (even to Sin and Satan) *ride on horſeback*, Eccleſ. 10. 7. This indeed is a myſtery that the world ſees not, becauſe they have not faith, and therefore not underſtanding of it they ſlight it; but the holy Spirit of Truth aſſerts it, *All*

things

things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours. But how theirs?

1. Not as to actual poſſeſſion, fruition, and enjoyment of all in their own perſons and comprehenſions; for the Kingdom is not yet received by them, only prepared for, and promiſed to them that love him: but in that reſpect *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he ſhall be my Son*, ſayes Revel. 21. 6, 7. See 1 Corinthians 2. 9.

But 2. In Chriſt their Head they poſſeſs all things. He poſſeſſes all things for them, and they in him, as they are his, and he Gods, *In him we are compleat*, Col. 2. 9, 10. And,

3. In and through Chriſt in our perſons, in title, and intereſt, by promiſe, as *Abraham*, *Iſaack*, and *Jacob* did the Land of *Canaan*, while yet they had it not in poſſeſſion; for *Iſrael* did not take away wrongfully the Land of *Canaan* from the Inhabitants, they claimed but their own by the gift of him who is the Lord of all the earth, and had

ſworn to give it them: and ſo the Fathers that are ſaid *to dye in faith, not having received the promiſes*, Heb. 11. 13. are yet ſaid *to have received them*, Heb. 6. 14. that is as to promiſe or covenant, and the title that gave them thereto. Thence too the believers are ſaid to *be heirs according to promiſe*, Gal. 3. 29.

4. In hope and expectation, *that being juſtified by faith, ye might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promiſed before the world began*, Tit. 3. 7. and 1. 2.

5. In uſefulneſs and benefit; *all things working together for good to them that love him, that are the called of God, according to purpoſe*, Rom. 8. 28. And *ſo they that overcome and keep Chriſts words, and keep* with God, are heirs of all things. *All that I have is thine.* Let us take a brief view or ſurvey of their riches.

1. God is theirs, and all that he is; not that he can be comprehended of and by them, ſeeing he comprehends them, and all things, and is himſelf incomprehenſible but by himſelf; but he is their God, their Father, their Portion, and Inheritance, as to be worſhipped and

ac-

acknowledged by them; ſo to inrich, ſave, and ſatisfie them. *The portion of Jacob is not like unto them, he is the former of all things, the Lord of Hoſts is his name*, Jer. 10. 16. and *the Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul, therefore will I hope in him*, Lam. 3. 24. *I go to my God, and your God, my Father, and your Father*, ſaith Chriſt, *John* 20. 17. an infinite portion; for in having him we have infinite Wiſdom to order and diſpoſe of all things for us, and our benefit, and of us alſo for our own greateſt happineſs; and to adviſe, counſel, and direct us in all our difficulties; infinite power to effect and bring about what in the counſel of his will or wiſdom, he ſees good to be effected, and to prevent and hinder, remove or deſtroy what he ſees deſtructive to us; infinite ſtrength to bear up all things for us, and us in all caſes, and to ſtrengthen us in all ſervices, and ſufferings; infinite duration to continue and lengthen out our happineſs for ever, that we may never be deprived of it, but enjoy it to eternity; infinite goodneſs to lead him to exerciſe all his other attributes for our infinite and ever-

everlasting advantage, infinite truth and holiness to perform all his words and promises to us, *&c.* and all this for us in and through Christ Jesus.

2. *Christ is Gods*, 1 Cor. 3. 23. and he is theirs, and all his infinite fulness, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, saith the Spouse, *Cant.* 2. 18. and 6. 3. *He that hath the Son hath life*, and *he that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ* (that is, that continueth in the belief and obedience of it) *He hath both the Father and the Son*, 1 John 5. 11. 2. 2 John 9. and its in having Christ that any man hath God, his God and portion, and hath all his fulness for him; for *he that transgresseth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ hath not God*, and its in him he hath all things, who hath and abideth in him, even unsearchable riches, in him infinite wisdom to order and manage all things with God for us, and from God to, over and about us, and to direct and guide us in all conditions. In him righteousness, infinite and everlasting, for presenting us just and acceptable in the sight of God, and in *him all the promises of God are, yea and Amen*, affirmed and confirmed, true

and

and certain, 2 *Cor.* 1. 19, 20. *Isa.* 45. 23, 24. In him holineſs infinitely for us, and therein dedication to God, and renewing into his image and likeneſs; grace to make us holy and renew us, and ſo to make us alſo Gods Inheritance, his choſen generation, Royal Prieſthood, Holy Nation, peculiar people. In him *Redemption even forgiveneſs of ſins through or in his blood*, Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. even infinite *plenteouſneſs of Redemption for redeeming us from all iniquities*, Pſal. 130. 7, 8. and ſo *from all* troubles, miſeries, bondages, death, the fruits of ſin lying upon us, *Pſal.* 25. 22. Yea even from bodily death and Grave, yea, from hell and deſtruction, *Rom.* 8. 23. *Hoſea* 13. 14. *John* 11. 25, 26. in him ſon-ſhip, heir-ſhip, title to the Inheritance, *John* 1. 12. *Gal.* 3. 26, 27. Yea in a word, *This is the record God hath given of his Son, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life*, 1 John 5. 11, 12.

3. God hath an infinitely Holy Spirit which he hath put upon Chriſt to bring

bring forth Judgement to the Gentiles, and this he alſo *gives* in and through Chriſt *to them that obey him*, Acts 5. 32. to help their infirmities, teach and lead them into the knowledge of Chriſt, glorifying him to them, and ſo into all truth, to bring his words to remembrance, juſtifie them in their Conſciences, ſanctifie and waſh them in the Blood and Name of Jeſus; comfort them in their exerciſes, tribulations, and temptations, be a Spirit of Holineſs to and in them, leading them in the way of, and framing and quickning them to holineſs, teaching them to pray, and groan after God, and his Grace, and Mercy in Chriſt for their helpfulneſs. In a word, to inhabit and dwell in them, through the Word, or Faith of Chriſt, and be in *them as a ſpring of living Waters, ſpringing up unto everlaſting life*, and gifting them for uſefulneſs to others, and ſo to be as rivers of *living waters flowing out of their bellies*, or inward man, to ſeal them up alſo to the day of redemption, and be to them the anointing and furniſher for Gods Service, the earneſt of, conductor to, and raiſer up of their dead

dead bodies, to the enjoyment of the Inheritance, *Rom.* 8. 14. 26, 27. *John* 16. 14, 15. and 14. 16, 17, 26. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *Isa.* 11. 2. *Gal.* 5. 16. *Psal.* 143. 10. and 119. 37. and 51. 10, 11. *Zech.* 12. 10. *Eph.* 2. 22. and 5. 18, 19. with *Col.* 3. 16. 1 *Cor.* 12. 7. *John* 4. 14. and 7. 37, 38, 39. 2 *Cor.* 1. 21, 22. *Ephes.* 1 14. and 4. 30.

4. God hath an innumerable company of Angels to minister to him, *Dan.* 7. 10, 11. and these are in and with Christ the Believers and Obeyers of him, *Pitching their tents about those that fear him, to deliver and save them*, Psal. 34. 7. *Bearing them up in their hands, and keeping them in all their wayes*, Psal. 91. 11, 12. *Sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. Incircling the Throne of God, the Camp, or Congregation of the Saints, as attendants about them, *Rev.* 5. 11. and 7. 11. bearing the souls of the just when taken hence, into rest and peace, as in *Luke* 16. 22, &c.

5. God hath many servants on the earth furnished with spiritual gifts for profiting the body of Christ, as Apostles,

ſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors, and Teachers: theſe are all theirs that obey and abide with him, *Let no man glory in man, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas*; not you theirs, but they yours, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. *Son of man*, ſaith God to *Ezekiel* (as both the Hebrew, Greek, and Latine read it) *I have given thee to the houſe of Iſrael for a watchman*, &c. not them to thee, to uſe as thou pleaſeſt, and to exerciſe Lordſhip over them, but thee to them, *Ezek.* 3. 17. and and ſo the Apoſtle, *We preach not our ſelves, but Jeſus Chriſt the Lord, and our ſelves your ſervants for Jeſus ſake*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. and *he aſcended up on high, and gave gifts to men, and he gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets*, &c. *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body Chriſt*, &c. Eph. 4. 8. 11, 12.

6. God hath the world as his, the frame and fabrick of it, and the Government orders, dignities, and fulneſs of it. This is theirs alſo, *All things are yours, the world*, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. The heavens and heavenly influences and Inhabitants, *He rides on the heavens for Iſra-*

els

els help, Deut. 33. 26, 27. their motions and influences, the light, warmth, and influences of the Sun, Moon, and other Stars, the Clouds and their ſhadow from the Heat, the Rain, *&c.* and whatever paſſeth through the air, animate or inanimate, as alſo the Air it ſelf, they are all for the benefit of Gods obedient Children, amongſt (and with more ſpecial eye to them then to) other men, for their nouriſhment, maintenance, refreſhing, chearing, and ſometimes for the exerciſe of their faith, patience, the Spirit of Prayer, *&c.* *Pſal.* 74. 12, 16, 17. and 89. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Deut.* 33. 27, 28. *Judges* 5. 20. *Joſh.* 10. 11, 14. *Zech.* 19. 1, 2. the earth and its fulneſs, the Sea, and all therein, affords them ſupplies, and God out of them and by them, *Gives meat to them that fear him, and will ever be mindeful of his Covenant*, Pſal. 111. 4, 5. beſides the manifold occaſions that they afford them to admire and bleſs the Lord, as manifeſtations of his Glory, Power, Wiſdom, Providence, Mercy, Juſtice, Truth, *&c.* in his providential ordering of them and their ſeveral Hoſts, *Pſal.* 19. 1, 2, 6.

and

and 65. 6, 7, 8. and 104. and 148. and manifold leſſons and inſtructions that they teach and ſuggeſt occaſionally to us, *Job* 5. 8, 9, and 12. 7, 8. *Matth.* 6. 26, 27, 29, 30. *Prov.* 6. 7, 8. and 30. 24, 25, &c. And then the orders of the world, the Magiſtrates, Kings, and Governors, and Authorities, *&c. They are the Miniſters of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *to thee for good*, not for miſchief and harm, *Rom.* 13. 3, 4. if thou doeſt well, to protect thee, that *thou mayeſt live a peaceable and quiet life in godlineſs and honeſty*, 1 Tim. 2. 2. and if they do otherwiſe, yet its for good to thee to exerciſe thy faith and patience, and quicken thee up to more mindefulneſs of the way to the heavenly inheritance, and make thee cry more earneſtly, *Ariſe O God, judge thou the earth, for thou ſhalt inherit all Nations*, Rev. 13. 5, 6. 10. *Pſal.* 82. 8. and whether they preſerve thee from being broken, or ſcower, and make thee look brighter, thou haſt no dammage but benefit by them; and ſo for all other things of the world, *Believers are the ſeed of Abraham*, and heirs, and bleſſed with him, and *he was heir of the world*, Rom. 4. 13.

7. *Liſt*

7. *Life* is Gods, to give and diſpoſe of; this is the Believers too; he is an *heir of life, and of the grace of life*, 1 Pet. 3. 8. Spiritual life is his to enjoy and ſerve God and Chriſt in and with, yea, and eternal life is his inheritance: nay, but this life is his too, and not he its, as a ſervant to this life, but it is a ſervant to him, to afford him time and opportunity to do his Fathers work in, that he may receive the fuller reward, and to give him leaſure to renew the ſpiritual things that by any means decay in him, that he may come to his Grave as a ſhock of Corn fully ripe, *Job* 5. 26. *Pſal.* 39. 13. *Pſal.* 6. 4, 5. and 30. 9. and 115. 17, 18. *Iſa.* 38. 19. *John* 9. 4. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. and 12. 1.

8. Yea, Death is Gods too, in his hand to diſpoſe, and its his Saints too, not they its, not its Vaſſals and Captives, but its theirs, and for their good, ſometimes to cut off and deſtroy their enemies that moleſt them, 1 *Sam.* 26. 10. *Iſa.* 51. 7. 8, 15. Sometimes to take themſelves from evil men, and things, and give them reſt and peace from their troubles, *Iſa.* 57. 1. 2. *Rev.* 14. 13. and the

the more to exercise their faith in God for the performance of his promises, when they see death seems to cut them off, and put them out of all possibility of attainment, *Ezek.* 37. 11, 12. *John* 11. 25, 26, 40. *Rev.* 13. 9, 10. and to give them more experience of Gods power and glory in the Resurrection, *Ezek.* 37. 11, 13. *John* 11. 4, 40.

9. *Things present are theirs*: Whatever God doth and orders now in this present world or time, his mercies theirs to incourage them to hope in him, his judgements theirs to make them fear and stand in awe of him, prosperity theirs to give them advantage to serve God with more chearfulness; and adversity theirs to exercise their faith and patience, and give them the more experience of Gods care of, and faithfulness to them, and the sufficiency of his Grace for them: yea, the very falls of others are theirs to awaken and admonish them to more watchfulness over themselves and others, and to exercise charity in pittying them, and seeking their recovery. *Yea all his wayes are mercy and truth to them that love God and keep*

keep his teſtimonies, Pſal. 25. 10.

10. *Things to come* (as they are Gods in his hand to produce and diſtribute according to his pleaſure, ſo) *they are theirs*, in and through Chriſt for their good, both as now propoſed in the word of God, the everlaſting rewards of righteouſneſs, to allure, incourage, and confirm them in the wayes of the Lord to ſeek and preſs after him, and keep his wayes in the love and obedience of him, *Heb.* 10. 35, 36, 37, and 12. 1, 2, 3. and the unſpeakable terrors of the Lord and deſtruction of the wicked to ſtir them up to more watchfulneſs, and care, leſt they ſhould ſin againſt him, and depart from him; they are but as armor of righteouſneſs on the right hand, and on the left, 2 *Cor.* 6. 7. and 5. 1, 10, 11. and the revelations and accompliſhments of them in the time to come. The joy, glory, and happineſs to come is theirs, to reward and ſatisfie them, the woe and vengeance and everlaſting fire is theirs (not they its) to avenge them of their enemies, the Devil and his inſtruments, and all the evils that here did moleſt them, and to give them infinitely more occa-

occasion and provocation for ever to admire his mercy towards them, and bless him, *Psal.* 145. 20, 21. *Luke* 12. 32. *Mat.* 25. 35, 36, 41, 46. *Isa.*66. 23, 24.

A marvellous, full, and glorious portion, and such as passes understanding; only there is this difference between the believers enjoyment of it now and hereafter: now they have the title to it, and the encouragement of the faith and hope of it, and so much of it as they need, and God sees good for them. But hereafter they shall have all that shall be then to be had in the most full, absolute, and glorious sight and fruition of it.

Use 1.

And the consideration of this with all before may serve,

1. To move such to contentation with their condition; for what can they want who have such a portion as God, and all that are his to satisfie and save them, *The just shall live by faith*; and this is a truth to faith, not to sense; and in living by faith may abundantly, and will administer content in every condition, and *Godliness with contentment is great gain. The Lord is my shepheard,* saith

ſaith *David, and thence infers I ſhall not want*: yea, thence he had abundant experience of Gods proviſion for him, and ſupplies of him, and faithfulneſs to him in all caſes, and therefore concludes, *Surely mercy and goodneſs ſhall follow me all the dayes of my life*, Pſal. 23. 1, 6. as thence alſo, or from the like conſideration of Gods goodneſs, and the bleſſedneſs of all that truſt in him, he exhorts and incourages others, *Fear ye the Lord ye holy ones, for there is no want to them that fear him; the Lions ſhall lack, and be bit with hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall want no good thing*. Pſal. 34. 8, 9, 10. Its true, the diſpoſe of all is in the Fathers hand; but he being wiſe, and loving, gracious, and full of compaſſion, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, cannot, nor will ſuffer his children at home with him to want any thing that may be good for them. And its but a childiſh humour (from which its good that we be weaned) to pet, and cry, and be froward for that that is not good, but hurtful for us, having all things that are our Fathers, and he being free to afford out of it all good for

us, *Be careful in nothing*, be peeviſh and diſcontent in nothing, be not covetous of more then we have, or of more then he thinks meet to give us into our poſſeſſion and fruition, but be *we content with what we have, for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, no I will never forſake thee: ſo that we may boldly ſay, the Lord is our helper, we will not fear what man can, ſhall do unto us*, Heb. 13. 5, 6. Minding what we have in Chriſt, and what ground of confidence that God will *give us all things with Chriſt*, becauſe he hath *not ſpared Chriſt, but delivered him up for us all*: let us through him be content with what he gives us, either of outward ſupplies, for this life, or of ſpiritual gifts, diſcoveries, experiences, comforts, or the like, waiting upon him, to give us eſpecially ſpiritual bleſſings, and taking what he gives without envying at others, or murmuring at him for what he gives them: But,

2. Oh the evil nature of envy, frowardneſs, pride, and diſcontent; though a man hath all things in Chriſt, and God is faithful to give us all things with him, as he ſees we need, and is good for us;

and

and though he gives abundantly like a Father to us, yet *the froward ſoul findes no good*, Prov. 17. 20. Frowardneſs and diſcontent eats out the good of what we have, and deprives us of the comfort of it, rendring it as nothing to us, and hinders us of what we might further have, as being freely expoſed to us; as may be ſeen in *Haman* partly, and in this elder Son. *Haman* though he had Honour, and Riches, and Wife, and Children, the Favour of the King, and as he thought, of the Queen too, yet the only want of a bow, or proſtration from *Mordecai*, a ſlight from him, marrs all the mirth from all other things, *What's all this to me* (ſaith he, when he had been telling his Wife and Friends of all his glory and happineſs, and enumerating all its ſeveral particulars) *ſo long as I ſee Mordecai the Jew ſitting at the Kings gate?* ſuch a viper is envy and diſcontent to eat out the bowels of them that breed and nouriſh it: And what leſs or better here was the caſe of this Elder Son, this righteous perſon, leavened with the Phariſees leaven; though all his Father had was his, yet all that con-

tents not, becauſe his Father had killed for his Brother the fatted Calf, and therein teſtified his love to him, and joy for him; as if all was loſt that fell beſides himſelf. But what, was he like to loſe his ſhare in any thing, becauſe of becauſe of his Brothers having part therein? ſurely no. The fatted Calf was not taken from him by being killed for his Brothers welcome; there was meat enough in it for him and his Brother too, yea, for the Father, and Sons, and Servants, and all to feaſt on: and if that could have been too little, yet the Son needed not fear want, the Father hath enough beſide to maintain and ſatisfie him: nor was his love the leſs to him, by being teſtified thus to his Brother. The ſame feaſt, though made by occaſion of his Brother, and for his entertainment, is free for him alſo; and his Father had intreated him to come in and take part of it: there was neither want in his Fathers love, nor in the ſufficiency of the chear to have made him as merry as his Brother, and the reſt that were making merry within. It was only his own pettiſh humour and diſcontent,

cauſe-

causeleſly at his Fathers dealing, that was the let that he was not as merry and as well refreſhed as any of them: his Father would have had him come in and welcome, and to be ſure his Brother would have been glad to have ſeen ſo much love and freeneſs in him towards him, and all the ſervants would have liked to have had his company with them; and as for the fatted Calf it was an everlaſting diſh that would have given him with all the reſt full ſatisfaction: it was ſpiritual and living meat, like to, or better then that the Jews call living water, that is Spring-water, that while its drawn out or received in its ſtreams, is not leſſened by mens taking of it, but runs ſtill perpetually, and increaſes in its running, and meets the perſon that likes to uſe it, and offers it ſelf of its own accord unto him. Such is living bread and meat, like the meat in the miracle, the loaves and fiſhes that multiplied in the eating of them, increaſed in the diſhes, and upon the trenchers (if they had any) and in their hands and mouths as they eat it; and could they have needed to have eaten of it till this day, might have grown upon

them yet: such this fatted Calf in the spirit and mystery of it, unless we take it for some particular visit, refreshing and chearing of the repentant sinners heart; like to a Posset or a Caudle made by a tender Mother for her almost drowned Childe, when being pulled out of the Pit, and brought home, she puts it to bed: and should the other Children that kept themselves in the house, and safe from the pit, murmur at such a thing as that, when they may at all times sit at meat with their Father, and eat of his meat, yea, and if they please, take part of that Posset too made for that escaped Childe? take it in either sense the murmuring was unreasonable, as the acts of envy and discontent all be. It was a good saying of an ancient Doctor, *Tolle invidiam & quod meum est tuum est: & si ego tollo invidiam quod tuum est meum est. Take away envy and frowardness, and what's mine is thine too; and if I put away envy from me, that that is thine is mine with thee.* This is (on the contrary to envy) the excellency of Divine Love and Grace, it makes all common that may be so lawfully, or

with

with expediency: and as God gives us an intereſt in all that he hath, leads us to ſay to our brethren too, all that we have is yours for your uſefulneſs: as the Saints in the Primitive Church, *that ſaid nothing that they had was their own*; they were ſo free to communicate it to all others alſo. Had this Brother ſaid to his younger Brother, as the Father to him, welcome home Brother, let us live lovingly together; and as my Father gives me intereſt in, and the uſe of all he hath, ſo I freely give thee leave to take part with me in all I have with him, and by his gift: It had been an entertainment of him worthy ſuch a condition of a Son of ſuch a Father; and that that may be propoſable to us for imitation.

3. This alſo ſhews the goodneſs of living at home with God, or walking with him dutifully in his wayes, ſeeing he that is ſo infinitely full, is ſo infinitely free too to them that love him, and keep his Commandments: not only a Sun and a Shield, but alſo *gives grace and glory, and withholds no good thing from them that walk*

uprightly with him: therefore, *O Lord God of Hosts, bleſſed is the man that truſteth in thee*, and *ſo abides in thy courts alwayes*, Pſal. 84, 10, 11, 12. Whither can we go from God to better our ſelves, as *Peter* ſaid, *Whither ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life*, John 6. 68. All is ours if we be with and keep to God; and we cannot have more then all by going from God, or ſinning againſt God: Nay, that's the way to go from all, for all is in and with God, and without him nothing but ſin, emptineſs, vanity, and vexation of ſpirit.

4. Therefore alſo it may provoke us not to leave him, but to keep cloſe to him, as *David*, or *Aſaph* ſaith, *Pſ.* 73.28. *It is good for me to draw nigh to*, (or as the vulgar reads it to hold me faſt by) *God*: ſeeing then we have all; whether would this Elder Son go, or what would he do, that he will not come to his Fathers houſe, and ſo to his Father, Brother, & the reſt therein? what, will he exclude himſelf from his Fathers houſe, and ſo deprive himſelf of all? and becauſe his Father receives him in, will he that is ſo angry at his Brothers naughtineſs, out of anger throw himſelf into his Brothers condition? and

di-

diveſt himſelf of all, becauſe his Brother is admitted to a ſhare with him? ſurely he took the courſe thereto by ſo doing: or would he turn his Father and Brother out of doors, or at leaſt his Brother, to make room for himſelf, as if the houſe was too little to hold them both? and a Kings Eſtate too little to maintain them both? ſure its better to ſubmit to God, and to reſiſt the Devil, from whom proceeds ſuch a temptation, and by living at home to keep poſſeſſion of all, rather then by ſtanding out, or departing to diveſt our ſelves of all: But if we would keep at home with God, we muſt take theſe helps and directions againſt diſcontent.

1. Minde the goodneſs of God to us in Chriſt, rather then our goodneſs, or good doings for or towards him; that was ſl pt out of this Sons eye, when he ſtands thus at a diſtance, and comes not in: the minding his Fathers goodneſs would have given him ſuch ſat sfaction, as to have contented him in all his ſervice with his Fathers dealings with him, and made him thought himſelf happy that he might ſo live with, and ſerve him ſtill. The application of the medi-

cine informs us of the diſeaſe; the Fathers minding him, what he afforded him, and what privlledges he enjoyed with him, ſhews us that the Son had forgot them when he fell into this froward diſcontented paſſion.

2. Conſider the abundant fulneſs in God, the abundant ſufficiency in him, together with his freeneſs to ſatisfie and content us and all others. *There is room enough* (ſaith *Abraham* to *Lot*) *in the land for us both, therefore let us not fall out betweene our ſelves, being brethren*, Gen. 13. 8, 9. Had this Brother minded how large his Fathers houſe was, and how large his eſtate, and how free he to communicate it, it might have kept him from this murmuring.

3. Be not haſty in our ſpirits, but wait for Gods counſels, inquire at his mouth, and *be ſwift to hear* what he hath to ſay to us, and *ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath*, James 1. 19. This Son was too haſty, he ſhould firſt have heard what his Father could ſay for his doings, before he had given way to his anger.

4. When *the right eye offends pluck it out, and caſt it from thee*; and ſo, when the

the right hand and foot offends cut them off, and caſt them from us. Caſt away the weight that preſſeth down, and the ſin that eaſily beſets. Keeping our eye ſingle to what is ſet before us in the teſtimony of God. It was this Brothers looking with an evil eye at his Fathers kindeneſs to his Brother, made him ſullen; and the minding what his hand and foot had done for his Father, how he had wrought and walked for him, that puſt him up with pride, and cauſed him to think his Brother got too much love that had done worſe and leſs then he: Good and needful it is to caſt away ſuch conſiderations as draw to diſcontent, and with-draw us from him. As it was alſo the Prodigals eying an excellency in his conceit, in having a portion in his own hands, and a ſufficiency in himſelf to manage it diſtinct and apart from his Father that led him into that ſeparation, and with-drawing from his Father, which brought upon him all this miſery that befel him: which now after ſo large a view taken of the elder Brothers ſtate, comes in the next place as the ſecond Branch of this Text to be conſidered by us, *viz.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The ſecond ſtate of wanderers from God, in two Branches, opened and applyed.

THE miſery of departing and wandring from God, implyed in theſe words, *This thy Brother was dead, was loſt*; a two-fold metaphorical expreſſion to repreſent it by. Let us briefly, and but briefly conſider them.

Branch 1.

Was dead. A ſinner by leaving God, and running after ſin and Satan, brings death upon himſelf, becomes as a dead man: So *Solomon* tells us too, *Prov.* 21. 16. *He that wandereth out of the way of underſtanding ſhall abide in the congregation of the dead:* For as the Apoſtle ſaith alſo to the Believers, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye walk after the fleſh ye ſhall dye*; and it muſt needs be ſo: for,

1. *With God is the fountain of life,* Pſal. 36. 9. *In his favour is life,* Pſalm 30. 5. and his eternal *Word*, or Son, is that eternal life, *that was with the Father.*

ther in the beginning, in whom was life; and *that was manifeſted* in theſe laſt dayes more fully to us, 1 *John* 1. 2. with *John* 1 4. The Spirit of God is life, and *the ſpirit of life*, Rom 8. 2. 10. by whom God through Chriſt breaths in life; and ſo this God, this one Father, Son, and Spirit, having life in himſelf, gives life alſo to others as he pleaſes, and hath *given to all life, and breath, and all things*: and ſo in the beginning when he made man, made him of the duſt of the earth, and *breathed in him the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul*, Gen. 2. 7. both as his body and perſon was made alive in the world, indued with breath, ſenſe, motion, and underſtanding; and alſo as his ſoul or inward man being upright, and having its dependance on God (being in ſubjection to his Word and Spirit, in his image and likeneſs, and ſo in his favour while upright) he was owned of him, and in union with him, and had peace and joy and ſpiritual life in himſelf, as ſo deriving it from him; but in departing from him, his word, and command (which is life, and tends to life alſo) is death; and

man

man so doing he dyed. Spiritually. First, as to the loss of the favour of God, in which was his life, and of his subjection to God, and fellowship with his Word and Spirit, the fountain and conveyor of life; and he fell under his displeasure in and from which is death, even the death of the spirit of man; inasmuch as the favour and fellowship of God, his Word, and Spirit, being withdrawn, his life was withdrawn with them, and inasmuch as it lay open to his anger to inflict misery upon it: and so the inward state of the soul and spirit, became unquiet, dead, without sense of the life of God (the favour, spirit, and operations of his grace in it) and was filled with fear, shame, guilt, as the effects of the life withdrawn, and misery deserved and exposed to: and then, bodily death as to its principles entred, and so the sentence for dying at Gods pleasure bodily and for ever (had not mercy looked upon man, and prevented) followed also, *Gen.* 2. 17. and 3. 18, 19. *Rom.* 5. 12. 18.

2. But God rich in mercy looking back upon his prodigal Son, man, here, devised

deviſed his recovery, and to that end ſent his Son or Word, that eternal life that was with him, and made him fleſh, and in that fleſh mortal and under the ſentence of death that was upon man; and accordingly *delivered him up to death for our Sins*, who, *by his death deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil*, and *ſwallowed up death* from off the nature of man, as it is in him, and filled it with immortallity and eternal life: ſo as *he having dyed, dyeth no more; death hath no more dominion over him*, but *the fulneſs of the God-head dwells in him bodily*; and all the fulneſs of his favour, grace, and bleſſing in which is life, yea, and the Spirit of Life is in and upon him: ſo as he alſo in dying, and by his death (inaſmuch as it was ſuſtained by him for us, even for all men) hath obtained a releaſe of all men from under that firſt Death and Judgement in which all univerſally and alike were condemned to dye (as it did and muſt have ſtood upon us without his interpoſing) and hath the ordering of Death, and Grave, and Hell in his hand, and diſpoſe with power and authority to bring us thereout,

and

and enliven and quicken ſoul and body, yea, and inveſt them with immortality and eternal life, as pleaſes him, he being in himſelf and for mankinde *the reſurrection and the life*, the deliverer and the raiſer, and the only ground or foundation, cauſe and effector of the Reſurrection in others; either as to ſoul or body, and the life quickning them, and in which they being quickned, live, *John* 11. 25. Yea in him is, and *God hath given to us* (even to the ſame us whom he commands to believe, which is all men, or men indefinitely) *eternal life*, ſo as that in partaking of him we partake of the Reſurrection, and are raiſed up in and by him in our ſpirits, and partake of life, ſpiritual life; and ſo, *whoſoever believeth in him, though dead* in himſelf, is enlivened by him, and *ſhall live*, and *being made alive in* believing and *going on yet to believe, ſhall not dye*, ſhall not loſe this life that he hath in and by him, for ever, but is alwayes in the raiſed ſtate as to his ſtate ſpiritually, and ſhall be ſo at the laſt day bodily too; and ſo alwayes in the favour of God, in which is life, in a juſtified ſtate from ſin and wrath,

curſe

curſe and death, and in a ſtate of acceptation with God, and heir-ſhip to the life promiſed further of God in and by him, and hath his intereſt in, and fellowſhip with God the fountain of life, and the Spirit of God, and its influences, who is the Spirit of life, and gives and upholds life, as it is ſaid, *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life*; and ſo as all mankinde are in a releaſed ſtate from the deſtructiveneſs of the firſt death as in, and of it ſelf, and in a poſſibility of life, becauſe in the hand of Chriſt, where is life, even ſpiritual and eternal life, yea, both for ſoul and body, as in a root and fountain for them, and communicable to them: ſo all ſuch of men, as in hearing and receiving the Word and Doctrine of Chriſt (which is called *the word of life*, and *life*, Acts 5. 20. John 6. 63. Prov. 4. 13. becauſe Chriſt objectively is in it, as the matter of it ſet forth in and by it, and his Spirit, which is life, and the Spirit of Life accompanies it, and breaths in it) are therein by the Spirit quickned and raiſed to ſpiritual life, endued with ſpiritual ſenſe,

ſenſe, and perception of ſpiritual things, and ſo of God and Chriſt, and to ſpiritual breath, and deſires after them, and motion towards them, and in them, and ſo ſpiritual underſtanding, peace, joy, ſatisfaction, according to the meaſure of Chriſt partook of by them; but yet ſo as the room enlightned by the Sun retains its light by admitting that light from without into it: ſo as if that be withdrawn and ſhut out the light within is gone, or as the branch lives in the ſtock and root; ſo as if it be ſeparated therefrom, it dies and withers: ſo is it here. The ſoul in thinking to live on it ſelf, or what it hath in it ſelf; yea, what life it hath received in it ſelf from Chriſt, and ſo with-drawing from Chriſt, and from his Word and Spirit, loſes its life, and dies, as it lets ſlip, departs from, and rejects Chriſt, or the Knowledge, Faith, and Spirit of God and Chriſt; ſo it departs from, and lets ſlip its life. Whence that of *Moſes*, *Deut.* 32. 46, 47. *Set your hearts to all the words that I teſtifie amongſt you this day; for it is not a vain thing for you* (or an empty word for you) *for its thy life*, and in this word (as the

the Hebrew words are, (ברבדוחי) *you ſhall prolong your dayes*: and ſo, *Prov.* 4. 13. *Lay faſt hold of inſtruction, let her not go, keep her for ſhe is thy life*; and ver. 23. *Keep thy heart above all keeping, or with all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of life*: and the Apoſtle *John*, 2 *John* 9. tells us that, *He that tranſgreſſeth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt hath not God*: that is (as by the oppoſition in the next branch of the verſe appears) *the Father and the Son*, and ſo by conſequent the Spirit of both, they are *ſtrangers from the life of God*, and ſo *without God and Chriſt in the world*, Epheſ. 4. 18. and 2. 12. and ſo they are dead.

1. Spiritually, as being deprived of ſpiritual life, and deſtitute of it, being in departing from the Word of God, and obedience of the Spirit of Chriſt therein.

1. Gone from Chriſt and his Spirit, and the Spirit of Chriſt departed and gone from them, as to any enlivening or living efficacies in them, as a principle of ſpiritual life in them; though in this there may be as a gradual departing from the

the word of God, and from God and Christ, and the Spirit therein: so a gradual with-drawing and dying of the spiritual life in them, as it is in the natural life, when a man forsakes his meat, that should preserve life in him: yea, and then,

2. There is a spending, consuming, or dying of the spiritual gifts or efficacies of the Spirit of Life formerly infused and found in them; though there may be for a time somewhat of these abiding, as it is in a branch, that though the life of it be gone, yet something of the sap and greenness, the effects of that life, abide for a time, and go away by degrees, *John* 15. 5, 6. and as the heat in a dead body, after the life and soul is gone, yet something of the heat and warmth often abide that was the effect of the soul and life while there, but that's decreasing too, and goes away at last; and this may be signified in the Parable by the Prodigals spending his portion or substance in riotous living: it was not all gone so soon as gone from his Father, but it soon after went away, and was spent; though yet the rational sense as a man,

man, a natural man may abide, and ſo he began to be in want; he was ſenſible there was not that of gifts, parts, and graces, fore-received from the Spirit of God as uſed to be; but that there was a loſs of thoſe things, and ſo of his comfort and hope ſpringing from them, they were gone: but then,

3. There is a ſenſeleſſneſs of ſpiritual and divine things properly ſuch, and of his ſtate in that reſpect, no ſight and view of the Glory of God that is in the face of Jeſus, nor of his excellencies and preciouſneſs, the Vertues of his Blood and Sacrifice, no hearing of his Calls, Counſels, Inſtructions, no ſpiritual hearing of his Voice, when wholly gone from God and Chriſt: He is deaf to all theſe things, nor knows, nor regards the meaning of them; no taſte and relliſh of the Grace and Favour of God, to and in his Spirit; no ſenſe and feeling of the joyes of Gods Salvation, and the workings and breathings of his Grace in him, *Prov.* 23. 35. nor of his judgements upon him, no ſavour or taſte of his graciouſneſs, nor ſmell of his ointments: could he but finde gifts or

part

parts, or ſome ſuch things, or have but the love, reſpect, or favour of ſuch as admired him before, its all he deſires, is ſenſible of the want of, or troubled about.

4. There is no breath, no ſpirit in any of his profeſſion, if the carkaſs of that remain; an outward form of godlineſs, there may be, and of religious acts, but no breath in them; no divine force, power, or vertue from Chriſt, as *the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without the works of it* or that works nothing in the ſoul, or upon others) *is dead, James* 2. 26. Nor is there any inward ſpiritual breathing after God, or towards him; as is ſeen in the Parable: where when the Prodigal began to be in want, he hath no ſenſe or remembrance of his Father, or Fathers houſe, nor deſire after it: but all ſpiritual things being gone; he goes further from his Father, and joyns up himſelf to a Citizen of that Countrey, puts himſelf ſervant, or an Apprentice to his luſt, or to Satan, wholly to be given up, and be at the beck thereof, and to ſeek ſatisfaction in and from it, as the Apoſtle

ſaith,

ſaith, *His ſervants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs,* Rom. 6. 16. and ſo he only *ſavors the things of the fleſh now,* and deſires *the husks that the Swine feed on,* which this Citizen ſet him to keep, even ſuch things as bruitiſh men delight and rejoyce in, and have their comforts from: Nor,

5. Is there any motion God-ward in him, no creeping, ſtirring, much leſs going towards him in his heart or ſpirit; but as a Swine-heard, a moving only as a rational or bruitiſh man, after the Swine and their husks; after and with evil, ſenſual, and wicked perſons: but as no thought or deſire after, ſo no ſeeking to go to his Father till he came to himſelf from out of that ſpiritual ſwoon or death, as we often finde the Scripture tells us the way of ſinners is that being gone from God, when they fall into miſery or want, yet *they return not to God that ſmites them,* nor ſeek healing and help in Chriſt, but run after dead works, or empty lying vanities, *asking counſel, but not of God, and covering with a cover, but not of his ſpirit, that they may adde*

ſin

ſin to ſin, Iſa. 30. 1, 2, 15. When God calls to return to him, they have no breath, deſire, ſenſe of, motion after the things in him, *But we will ride upon horſes*, ſay they, *and flee upon the ſwift*: and as in *Hoſ.* 5. 13. *When Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah his wound; then went Ephraim down to Aſſyria, and ſends to King Jareb*, &c. No motion towards God, but from him: and therein,

6. As from a dead body there iſſues forth filth and ſtineh, blood, and matter ſometimes that is loathſome and abominable, and makes it unfit to be amongſt the living: ſo is it with dead ſouls, devoid of the life of God, as *Pſal.* 14. 1, 2, 3. *The fool* (or fallen man, fallen from God and Chriſt) *ſaith in his heart, there is no God* (there's his voidneſs of ſpiritual, life, ſenſe, or motion, or faith towards him; as alſo in that, *Rom.* 3. 12. *There is none that underſtandeth, none that ſeeketh after God*; but then beſide it follows) *Corrupt are they, and have done abominable works; there is none that doth good, no not one: they are all become filthy* (or as in the Margin, *ſtinking*) *loathſome*. And as in Rom. 3. 13. *Their throat*

throat is an open Sepulchre, nothing breaths out thence but putrifaction, and filth, and ſtench; things abominable to God, and unacceptable to God and good men. When the Doctrine of God, and the Spirit of God and Chriſt are gone once, and the ſavour of his Grace loſt, though there may be yet too a form of Prayers, Faſting, and outward formalities and obſervances; yet then they are all *dead works*, Heb. 9. 14. as a *menſtruous cloth*, a filthy thing, *The ſacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 15. 8. and 21. 27. Iſa. 1. 11, 13, 14. and unpleaſing to men, unſavory to thoſe that are ſpiritually men indued with ſenſe, reaſon, and underſtanding: nay often groſs prophaneneſs and debauchery iſſues from them.

7. And then as dead bodies they are ſeparated from the living; from the living God, and his living Houſhold and Family. God cannot endure to look towards them with any delight or likement of them, or have them in his ſight or preſence: they are condemned of him, loathed and deteſted, as to their dead eſtate by him, cut off from him, and

and his justifying, and approving Grace, and then objects of his anger or displeasure, as any evil or vain Spirit may bring them before him, or make them come as dead carkasses possessed with evil spirits into his sight.

2. And so (if they be not through some miraculous mercy revived) they be dead as to body; not only in that they must as all others come to a natural death in the appointed time, but often are also exposed to, in danger of, and sometimes taken away by judicial deaths, as either in some judgement or testimony of wrath from God, as *Pharaoh*, when drowned in the Red Sea, *Saul* conquered by the Philistines, and slaying himself, and many of the Rebellious Israelites destroyed in the Wilderness; or else as sometimes by some judicial deaths from men, as *Zedekiah* and *Ahab* whom the King of *Babylon*, rosted in the fire, *Jer.* 29. 22. The two Malefactors that were put to death with Christ; God sometimes permitting, and in anger against his people for their voluntary goings from him, giving them up so far to their own hearts lusts, (as *Psal.* 81. 11, 12.)

11, 12.) as to ſuffer them to fall into notorious ſins, ſuch as bring not only ſhame, but exemplary puniſhments by death alſo; or however (perſiſting) they dye in their ſins as to their bodies alſo; yea, and if by theſe things mercy be not extended, ſo as to turn them to God, and pull them out of ſpiritual death, there follows at length,

3. Eternal death of body and ſoul wholly caſt out and ſeparated from God, and from his preſence into everlaſting miſery and torments, both in ſouls and bodies for ever, in which is both a perfect loſs and deprival of all good things both bodily and ſpiritual; and alſo a perfect and eternal ſubjection to all miſery and miſchief, pain, ſorrow, and unſpeakable torment upon ſoul and body for ever: a ſad and doleful portion of the workers of iniquity, and of thoſe that having been quickned up to a ſpiritual life let it ſlip again, and depart from it by going away from the Doctrine of Chriſt, and ſo from Chriſt and the Holy Spirit, and ſo finally perſiſt; but this laſt was through mercy here prevented. This is one expreſſion of the ſad eſtate

of the sad estate of such persons. *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23. The other is,

Branch 2.

He was lost. The word, say some Criticks here translated, *Lost*, is at the best of a harsh signification, ἀπολωλὼς, at the best to dye, yea, to dye by some miserable way: to perish; as in this parable, *I perish with hunger*, ver. 17. and so the expression of coming to himself implyes that he was extinct for a time, fainted and dyed away through hunger; but that the mercy of God revived him, he had quite perished, which is worse then simply dead: perisht; as we properly say of those that dye of hunger and cold, and are lost for want of help, or looking to, he being gone away from them that used to look to him: or with reference to the other Parables where (whatever the Criticks say) the same word is used of the sheep and groat, lost, so as not forthcoming, or found; and so being a loose Son, he was not only a loser, but quite lost himself too: Such the fruit of mens sinning and wandring from God. Let us view it in some particulars.

1. He

1. He was a loſer, though that's not all,, he loſt his Father, and his Fathers houſe, his portion, and patrimony, his enjoyments he was wont to have, and his brother yet had; all that entertainment, food, rayment, harbour, ſhelter, lodging, attendance, reſpect, and honour, which he had in his Fathers houſe formerly; theſe and all things of that nature were wholly loſt and gone from him, and from his enjoyment and intereſt: and is this nothing for ſinners to loſe? both livelihood and life, yea ſuch a livelihood, and ſuch a life as God in Chriſt is, and gives: ſuch ſafety, ſatisfaction, content, reſt, and refreſhing, hope and rejoycing, as his Word, and Spirit, and Chriſt in and by both, and God in and by all, give to the abiding ſoul, to loſe a moſt ſweet, ſecure, ſatisfying, and abiding livelihood and life, it cannot be expreſſed: to loſe a Kingdom with all its contents.

But 2. He was loſt himſelf, he was gone quite out of all theſe things, and out of the way to them again, as a ſheep loſt out of its paſtures. He was not to be found either in his Fathers houſe, or

Fields, under none of his promiſes, under no engagement of his ſhelter, or protection, in no way of his, or of his ſervants and peoples walkings. He was gone (and ſo are ſinners) out of all Gods paths, and ſo from all Gods promiſes of protection, mercy, or bleſſing, and ſo lay open to any danger that might befal him, only meer undeſerved, yea, uningaged mercy in God and Chriſt prevented his being actually torn in pieces, and devoured for ever: but as he was found in none of Gods paths, ſo he had no engagement from God, that he could challenge to keep him from deſtruction, even from dropping into Hell, and everlaſting damnation. The ſervants of God might ſeek for him in the houſe of God amongſt his Saints, and Holy Ones, but not finde him, they might ſeek him in any of the wayes of the righteous, and not finde him; nay, nor God, nor his abiding Brethren could finde him there, though they never ſo diligently ſeek for him.

3. He was loſt: no endeavour or diſpenſation of God met with him for a time to work upon his heart and conſci-

ence,

ence, and so in that sense to finde him out. He was dead, and deaf to all means used for a great while (these many years, saith the elder Son) toward him; neither those gifts and enjoyments which he had received from his Father, and which were riotously mis-spent by him, found him so as to work upon his heart, and make him remember his Father from whom he had them. *Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked; thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, then he forsook God, &c. Of the Rock that begot thee, thou art unmindeful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee*, Deut. 32. 15, 18. And she *remembred not that I gave her her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver and Gold, which she prepared for Baal*, saith God to back-slidden *Israel*, *Hos.* 2. 8. Nor did the Famine brought upon the Land, and the emptiness proved in all enjoyments, and the defect of them, the want he was reduced to, (the pains and afflictions he met with) work upon him to remember his Father; but he thinks of other wayes to get a livelihood, rather then of returning to him again. *This people returns*

not to him him that ſmites them, neither do they ſeek the Lord of Hoſts, Iſa. 9. 13. And God did this, and that evil to *Iſrael*, yet *they returned not to him*, ſaith, Amos 4. 6, 7, 8. they *have ſtricken me, but I was not ſick, they have beaten me, but I felt it not*, ſayes the beſotted Sinner, *Prov.* 23. 35.

4. He was loſt, ſo as he knew not which way to get back again; nay, he had not a thought to return, he wandered after ſatisfaction indeed, but knew not the way to it, nor could attain it; but was like thoſe in *Pſal.* 107. 4, 5. *That wandered in the Wilderneſs, and found no way, hungry and thirſty their ſouls fainted in them, they had not a City of habitation.* Such his eſtate till mercy ſaved him.

5. He was loſt, he was miſerably periſht, through many foul ſins, and filthy tranſgreſſions, and lewd courſes, and by many ſad convincements, convictions, checks, and bangs of conſcience, and as it were Devils and evil Spirits, renting and tearing out his bowels, wringing him with inward pains, and ſenſe of helliſh miſeries, perplexities, fears,

fears, horrors, deſpairs, quite brought down as it were into the pit of deſtruction. *Manifold ſorrows* (or great plagues, as the vulgar reads it) *ſhall be to the wicked*, Pſal. 32. 11. *Yea, they ſhall multiply ſorrows to themſelves that haſten from God after another: their drink-offerings of blood will not Chriſt offer, nor take up their names into his lips.* Will not mediate nor intercede for any acceptance of any of their ſervices in which thus bent they ſeek deliverance from their horrors, and terrible perplexities, no not any of the works of righteouſneſs of their own, with which perhaps they would eſtabliſh their hearts before God, they being but as things thrown to Dogs, (σκύβαλα) or Swine, as theſe huſks in the ſpirits account, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. Oh the miſery of departing from God, *All they that forſake thee ſhall periſh*, Pſal. 73. 27. *and thou deſtroyeſt all them that go a whoring from thee.*

7. He was loſt, periſht without God, without hope in God and Chriſt, had no hope to uphold him, nothing of his former gifts, part, portion, would now relieve him, it was all ſpent and gone; he

had consumed that with riotous living, and nothing this Citizen, to whom he had bound or joyned himself, affords him, could give him any comfort; but despair and destruction seize upon him, and swallowed him up, as it were: so that he might say, as in *Ezek.* 37. 11, *As for us, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.* Or as those, *Lam.* 4. 17. *As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help,* &c or as *David, The sorrows of death compassed me about, the pangs of hell caught hold upon me, I found woe and sorrow,* Psal. 116. 3, 4.

7. He might be (and sinners oft are) lost and perisht as to this life, by falling into some notorious evils, fall under the law, or into some loathsome and foul disease, bringing him into death here, in a perishing way for this world, and all the mercy he might have had and enjoyed therein, had he kept Gods wayes, and not departed from them; for so sometimes the word perishing or lost is meant of perishing or being lost men here, cast and condemned at law, sentenced to dye, or utterly cut off from the land of the living and this is the way

some-

ſometimes between the Bridge and the Water to finde mercy. So the Diſciples cried out to Chriſt, *Matth.* 8. 25. *Maſter ſave us, we periſh*, that is, we are loſt as to our lives here.

8. And unleſs he had periſhed thus (perhaps) he had periſhed worſe, even eternally from the preſence of God, and from the glory of his power, ſo as to be loſt and periſht for ever, with the Devil and damned ſpirits in unutterable, unbearable, endleſs, remedileſs, miſeries and deſtruction: for ſinners turned aſide from God are in the way to this, and this unleſs mercy prevent will be their iſſue, *Such is the portion of all that forget God, and the Hypocrites hope ſhall periſh.* See *Heb.* 2. 3. and 10. 29, 30, *&c.*

Uſe.

And is not this a ſad portion? and who would turn from ſuch a portion as the former to ſuch a portion as this latter? who but mad men would run from God to the Devil? from all to nothing, or from all that's good to nothing but what is unſpeakably bad and ſad, from Heaven and Happineſs, to Hell and Deſtruction? what is there in the pleaſure

ſure of ſin, or in the profit of it that can countervail either the pleaſure or profit of the former portion loſt, or the pain and miſery of this portion incurred? Oh what's an inch of pleaſure to an immeaſurable pain! a minute of ſweetneſs to an endleſs bitterneſs: yea, if it were but a months, or years; but how much more to many years gall and wormwood? a ſuperficial appearance of delight to a real deep heart-ſinking torment and diſtreſs? how vain is the pretence of ſin, that we ſhall ſtep but a little aſide, and it will let us return again? whereas when it hath once got us out of the way it leads us into a Wilderneſs, where we loſe our ſelves, and can finde no way out? how deſperate a thing is it to believe the deceits of ſin, or of a deceitful heart, then which there is nothing ſo deceitful or more deſperately wicked in the world? It will bid us *put but a little from the ſhoar*, and when it hath got us off, *makes us launch out into the deep*: It carries the heart as with a ſtorm into the Ocean, whence it returns not again but by the belly of Hell, like *Jonas*, if ever it return: how many ſinners

ners flatter themſelves in their own eyes, till they fall into the deep ſleeps of ſin, and awake not out of them but in death, either temporal or eternal? O what Wine, or Woman, what ſport or Paſtime, what Honour or Advancement, nay, what Crown or Kingdom is that that can be worthy of the loſs of ſo great a happineſs as is that of the obedient Children in Chriſt; or of the incurring of ſuch a portion as endleſs; yea, or but as the danger of endleſs deſtruction. What folly and madneſs is it to exchange an infinite Birth-right for a meſs of Pottage? and beſide that loſs, to incur the puniſhment of a perpetual dungeon, with all the exquiſiteſt torments can can be thought on?

Uſe 2.

Therefore alſo it ſpeaks admonition to us all to take heed of departing from the Lord: yea, it is to all a warning to take heed and ſtand in awe, and not to ſin, though more eſpecially to ſuch as have taſted the graciouſneſs of the Lord, and been in any meaſure brought to him not to revolt and depart from him again. *All that are far from God ſhall periſh,*

and

and needs they must, because they are far from him that is the fountain of all good, life, and safety; but *God destroyes all them that go a whoring from him*, Psal. 73. 27. They shall not only perish as out of necessity, as being without that that should keep them alive, but God himself also will set himself against them to heap upon them what makes for their destruction. *I will heap mischiefs upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them*, saith he, *Deut.* 32. 23. Oh therefore *take we heed of an evil heart of unbelief of departing from the living God*: for not only there is nothing like him, we can go after from him (if *we turn aside* from him, *we must needs go after vain things, and things that cannot profit, because they are vain* 1 Sam. 12. 21.) but also *if any man draw back, Gods Soul shall have no pleasure in him*; which is but a figurative expression of more meant then said: as namely, that he will with-draw from him and be angry with him. It is good for us to hold us fast by God; and that we may do so its good and needful.

1. To take diligent heed to his word and testimony, minding, meditating, and

and yielding up our ſelves to the obedience of the truth and grace diſcovered therein; and the wholeſome counſels and commands therein, and there-from given: for *by what means ſhall a young man cleanſe his way, but by taking heed thereto, according to Gods word*: and what way is there to be kept from ſinning againſt, or departing from God like *the hiding his word in our hearts*, as *David* ſayes he did, *Pſal.* 119. 9, 11. *Bleſſed is the man that makes the word of the Lord his delight, and therein meditates day and night; for he ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers ſide*: not to be blown away with any winde of Doctrine, or temptation, as the chaffe in the floor, as ungodly men, *Pſal.* 1. 3, 4. *We Ought therefore to give earneſt heed to the things which have been ſpoken to us in the Goſpel, leſt at any time we let them ſlip. Keep wiſdom and her inſtructions, and ſhe and they will keep us*, Hebrews 2. 1. Prov. 4. 6.

2. To walk in company with, and in the love of our brethren, thoſe that are wiſe, for that's the way to be wiſe, Prov. 13. 20. *Two are better than one*, in many

many reſpects either to hold one the other up from falling, or help one the other up when fallen, *Eccleſ* 4. 9 10. *And a three-fold cord is not eaſily broken.* There's warmth in ſuch fellowſhip, *Did not our hearts burn within us while walking together, Chriſt joyn'd himſelf and communed with us*, Luke 24. 32. There *God commands the bleſſing and life for evermore*, where *brethren dwell together in unity*, Pſal. 133. So we may exhort one another to love and good works; yea, daily while its called to day, to the preventing our hearts, being hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, *Heb.* 3. 12, 13. and 10. 24.

3. *To watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.* Watching and taking heed to the word of God, and in the light thereof againſt Satan; and what would draw us from God, and praying and crying mightily to God for our ſelves and one another; that he would ſhew us his way, lead us in his path, and guide us, and uphold us, that we fall not; yea, to *hold us up in our goings, that we may be ſafe*, as knowing that we need his guidance and ſupport

at all times, and that of our ſelves we are good for nothing, *Matth.* 26. 41. *Pſal.* 25. 4, 5. and 27. 13, 14. and 119. 116, 117.

4. To beware of all ſuch things as might undo us, and with-draw us from God, as to ſay as of all ſin in general, ſo particularly.

1. Of ſinful porings upon our own weakneſſes, unworthineſs, inabilities to do or ſuffer, with a neglect of the Grace given us in Jeſus Chriſt for our helpfulneſs every way. *Take heed of an evil heart of unbelief*, but *caſting away the weights that preſs us down, and the ſin that eaſily beſets us, let us run with patience the race ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the Author and finiſher of the faith*, Heb. 3, 12. and 12. 1. 12.

2. Of knowing our ſelves in any of our receipts, gifts, attainments, and ſo of being puffed up with pride, to be high minded, and to think to live of our ſelves, and not upon and by the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, *Pride goes before deſtruction, and a haughty minde before a fall*, Prov. 16. 17, 18. *Be not high minded, but fear*, *Rom.* 11. 20, 21. The deſire of a portion

tion in himſelf, and his conceit of living upon that portion received was the fall of the Prodigal that brought this death and loſs upon him, *Luke* 15. 11,12.

3. Of falſe Prophets who would draw us from Chriſt into our ſelves, or after the world and fleſh, from walking in the narrow way of truth, to wander in the broad way of ſin and errour, *Matth.* 7. 13, 15. *Ceaſe to hear the inſtruction that cauſeth to erre from the words of knowledge*, and *go from the preſence of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt not in him the lip of knowledge*, Prov. 14. 7. and 19. 27.

4. Of the inticements of ſinners, and of worldly carnal perſons; and to that purpoſe of haunting, walking, or being yoaked up with them; for they will prove ſnares to our ſouls, and draw us away from God by their converſations, *Pſal.* 1. 1. *Prov.* 1. 10, 11. and 9. 6, 7. and 13. 20. and 22. 24. 2 *Cor.* 6. 14, 15, 16, 17.

5. Of ſlothfulneſs in the way of God, for that will caſt into a deep ſleep, and lead to wearineſs and fainting, *Prov.* 19. 15. *Be not ſlothful, but follow their ſteps, who*

who through faith and patience have inherited the promiſes, Heb. 6. 12.

6. Of giving way to our affections and paſſions, *Be ſober, be vigilant, for our adverſary the Devil goeth about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour*, &c. 1 Pet. 5. 8. *Mortifie we our Members that are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, evil concupiſcence, inordinate affections, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry: put off alſo theſe things, anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, lying*, &c. Col. 3. 5, 8. I might adde more, as not to dally with temptations, nor conceal, but diſcloſe them ſeaſonably to ſome faithful friends, *&c.* But I forbear; in reading, and minding the Scriptures, and calling upon God, we may get ſuch underſtanding, as to diſcern and hate every falſe way, *Pſal.* 119. 104.

Uſe 3.

Think upon our wayes, and bring them to the light of Gods truth, and where we finde we have gone awry, *Turn we our feet to Gods teſtimonies, ſearching and trying our wayes, and turning to the Lord*, Pſal. 119. 59, Lam. 3. 40. Yea, where we have turned out from God, make haſte

haſte to return and keep his Commandements again. *Let the wicked forſake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn to the Lord, for he is gracious, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Iſa. 55. 7. not continuing in ſin, to back-ſlide to a perpetual back-ſliding, *refuſing to return, and holding faſt deceit, till there be no remedy but deſtruction*, not deſpairing of finding mercy and forgiveneſs with him upon returning to him; for *with him there is mercy, and with him plenteouſneſs of redemption*, in ſeeking to him that wounds for ſin he will heal us; yea, *he will revive and quicken us*, and *the third day we ſhall live in his ſight*, Hoſ. 6. 1. but that leads us to, and ſprings from the third Branch, *viz.*

CHAP. IX.

The third ſtate of Penitent Sinners, in two Branches of it opened.

THE joyful and good eſtate of ſinners that return to God after they have

have wandered from him, and that's signified in these expressions, *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, was lost, but is found*; in which are three expressions considerable, as implying the goodness and joyfulness of such a state, *viz.*

1. In that it is said, *He is alive again.*
2. In that its said, *He is found,*
3. In that its said, *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad.*

Branch 1.

First, The converted, repenting, and returned sinner is alive again, he is come to himself again, *ver.* 17. How comes that about?

1. Not from himself, he had no power while alive to keep himself of, and by himself, being with-drawn from his Father, from dying, *None can keep alive his own Soul*, Psal. 22. 29, How much less when dead can any quicken himself again? But,

2. It was from and by the good Shepheard seeking him and *restoring his soul*, Psal. 23. 3. Though sinners by departing

ing from Christ in his Word and Spirit, and so from God lose their life and dye: Yet Christ from whom they depart loses not the life that's in him for them; in him, yet is life as the root of mankinde, or for mankinde to be enlivened by, or as the fountain and spring of life: and though the branch be dead, yet this root can infuse life to it again; and though the pipe being cut be dry, yet the Fountain being a living Fountain can fetch in the pipe again, and infuse living waters again into it. Christ lives, though the sinner dye, and while he is not as a tree twice dead, pluck't up by the roots and withered; yea, as a branch cut off from the stock, withered, gathered, and cast into the fire and burnt: such is the nature and excellency of this stock above all other stocks, and of this root above all other roots, that it can gather it into unity with himself again, and infuse new life into it. God *is able to ingraft the cut off Branches in again*, Rom. 11. 23. Yea, some compared to *trees twice dead*, may be *pull'd out of the fire*, Jude 12, 23. with Zech. 3. 2. That is while a man is not wholly given up of God, and rejected;

jected; while the day of Grace is not wholly past and expired Christ hath life in himself for men, and so as he can extend it to men to quicken them again, and bring them back to himself, and to the life in him; for the Spirit is still upon him, and is the Spirit of Life, and the word is still in his mouth, a living word; and he can yet *call to the dead, and make them hear, and hearing to live,* John 5. 25. *Adam* when he was fallen, and we in him, he could not recover us again, for he was but a living soul at first, and being dead, our root in him was dead, and so we also irrecoverably lost and gone in him: But this second *Adam* is not so, he being dead for us, raised himself again, and he lives yet, and hath the power or keyes of Hell and Death, and can therefore revive us, though dead: therefore writing to the Angel of the Church of *Sardis*, of whom he sayes, *That he had a name to live, but yet was dead,* he saith, *Thus saith he that hath the seven Spirits, and the seven Stars.* Having the seven Spirits of God, though he that he speaks to be dead, yet his speaking to him can

put

put life into him, and therefore he rationally enough bids him *be watchful, and ſtrengthen the thing that be ready to dye, and remember how thou haſt heard and received and hold faſt.* &c Rev. 3. 1, 2, 3. If he ſay *Lazarus come forth*, though he was dead *he lives*, becauſe he is the *Reſurrection and the life*, and his giving forth this life by his Spirit in his word again, brings in the nature and operations of life into the dead ſinner, though as rubbing and chafing men in a ſwoon, often helps to revive them: ſo here we may conceive Gods ordering the Prodigal to be ſo pinched with poverty might conduce to the receiving him. See the like intimated, *Hoſ.* 5. 15. with 6. 1. but in the life infuſed was,

1. An inward ſpiritual ſenſe, minde, and remembrance of things that in the ſtate of death were forgotten, and not thought of or apprehended, as we finde this dead Prodigal reviving calls to remembrance what he thought not on before, at leaſt with any livingneſs; as that he had a Father, and a Fathers Houſe, in which were many hired Servants, and bread enough for them all,

and

and to ſpare, and that he periſht there for hunger. Now he is awakened both to a ſenſe of his ſtate, and to an underſtanding, where he may finde relief; or rather this was as *Aqua vitæ* infuſed into him.

2. An inward deſire and breathing after that relief and help that he is made apprehenſive of, and whereof he had had before the taſte and experiment; for that's imp'yed in his reſolving to go to his Fat.er for it, that he defired and breath d after it. So the ſinner brought into minde and remembrance of God and his goodneſs in Chriſt, in his reviving again hath effected in him a deſire to finde that goodneſs again, which he had proved before, and that he hath again heard of, and remembers. And this is a gaſping for life and breath again upon the *Aqua vitæ*, or Water of Life infuſed.

3. An inward hope that he may be made partaker thereof again in giving diligence to return to God in Chriſt for it, and to ſeek it in him, and in his favour and love towards him; and indeed therein life is more compleatly entred, or

breath recovered; and the ſoul more properly lives in the receiving this hope, and having it begotten in the heart, and though it be but of a poſſibility, and ſome likelihood of being made a partaker of ſatisfaction again in God and Chriſt. Whence proceeds and ſprings as a further action of life.

4. An inward purpoſe and reſolution of quitting his preſent poſture, in which this thought of God and his goodneſs coming upon it, found it. This ſtate of ſinning, keeping Swine, maintaining and nouriſhing bruitiſh luſts, affections, and appetites; in the objects whereof the Soul and ſpirit findes no ſatisfaction, together with a purpoſe to riſe up from under thoſe diſcouraging complaints and deſpairs, under which it before lay pining, and to betake it ſelf by faith and repentance unto God its Father, from whom and whoſe houſe it had departed, and to confeſs its ſin, and vileneſs, and ſubmit it ſelf to his diſpoſing. *I ſaid I will confeſs my ſin*, Pſal. 32. 4, 5. *I will ariſe and go to my Father, and I will ſay to my Father, Father I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am not worthy*

worthy to be called thy Son, make me as one of thy hired servants, This like the moving and ſtretching himſelf when a perſon is come to himſelf, and revives.

5. A putting that reſolution into practice, ſtrengthning thoſe things that they might not dye again, by ſtill remembring his Father, and ſtill retaining in minde, the fulneſs of his Fathers houſe, and his great goodneſs to all therein, of whatſoever condition; and ſo he roſe up both from his ſinful way, practiſe, ſtate, and condition, and from his pining away in himſelf, and in the poring upon his own want, and wretchedneſs, and betook himſelf towards his Father by faith and repentance; like the revived man's turning himſelf that he may get up.

6. Being thus made alive by the Grace of God underſtood and yielded to as common, in its gracious workings in the ſoul, as infuſing principles of life, while he is yet but begun to act and exerciſe that life, in putting his reſolutions into performances, his Father ſees him, and pitties him, and runs, meets, imbraces, and kiſſes him: that is, while the

ſoul is thus turning to God, and going back towards him in the exerciſe of faith and repentance, though but in their beginnings. God in the greatneſs of his compaſſion and goodneſs cloſes with it, returns to it, accepts it, incourages and helps it, and ſpeaks comfortably to it, kiſſes it with the kiſſes of his mouth, and therein further puts life and ſtrength into it, making it more to hope for his pardon and mercy toward it: And this is like the giving the hand to a reviving man, endeavouring to turn himſelf, and to ariſe, to help him up therein, and then,

7. He more confidently (though yet humbly and penitently) confeſſes his ſins and wretchedneſs to his Father, and humbles himſelf to him, and ſo exerciſes repentance in theſe acts of it. *Father I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy Son*; wherein he is like to *Daniel* on his knees and hands, or as one that begins to ſpeak.

8 And then he receives a full and free pardon of all his former ſins and offences, and is made alive with the life

of

of juſtification implyed in his calling for, and putting upon him the beſt robe, even the righteouſneſs of his Son, which he will have his Servants and Miniſters alſo to declare to him, or put upon him, being in his Fathers gracious acceptation, imbracing and kiſſing him, as it were inwardly, and in the Court of Heaven forgiven before: and now he is indeed alive from the dead, and as a man upon his legs again, while he is not only inwardly quickned, but alſo outwardly by his Fathers ſentence proclaimed as an acquit and juſtified perſon, whom he will not call to an account for his former miſpending his living, nor execute judgment upon him to death, according to the law in that behalf provided againſt rebellious and ſtubborn Children that are gluttonous and drunkards, *Deut.* 21. 20. but being a new man is owned in Chriſt, in whom he preſents him to himſelf juſt and righteous, and now he hath received him ſafe and ſound, *ver.* 27.

9. And ſo is further acknowledged as his loving Son, while the ring is put upon his finger for ornament, or eſpouſing the ſoul to himſelf again in righteouſ-

neſs and faithfulneſs, and his feet ſhod to prepare him to walk up and down as his Son before him; and herein he is fully reſtored to his former ſtate of favour with his Father, and Fathers Houſe, and to his preſtine Dignity. And in theſe things.

Branch 2.

He is found. The repenting converted ſinner that returns to God is found again: found, paſſively; not that he found himſelf, or recovered himſelf, but the good Shepheard that *came to ſeek and ſave that that was loſt.* Findes him, and he is found when he comes back again. Though the wayes by which that good Shepheard ſeeking, findes, may be different; and here ſeems to be implyed to be,

1. By neglecting him as to appearance, or ſuffering him to wander after his own hearts luſt, till he be quite loſt and periſhing, *Till he eat the fruit of his own way, and be filled with his own inventions,* till he *fall down hungry and thirſty, and his ſoul faints in him,* Pſal. 107. 4, 5. as is ſaid in *Hoſ.* 5. 15. *I will go and return to my place* (as it were leaving them,

and

and letting them take their own course, till misery and affliction come upon them) *till they acknowledge their offences, for* (then) *in their affliction they will seek me early.* To further which also God

2. In the mean while by a secret ordering Providence suffers not the sinner to finde the life of his own hands, or not to continue so to do, but to be reduced to more misery and want daily, and to be crost in, and disappointed of his expectations in all his wayes, which is that he sayes in *Hos.* 2. 6. *That he would hedge up the sinners way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not finde her paths, and she shall follow after her lovers, but shall not overtake them, and shall seek them, but shall not finde them; then shall* (or will) *she say I will go and return to my first Husband,* &c. Just as this Prodigal meeting with a Famine in one place, and pined with hunger; none giving him husks in the other place was that way found, or brought to himself to say, *How many servants in my Fathers house have bread enough,* &c. *And I will arise and go to my Father,* &c. And the way in which God usually doth this, is ex-

preſt in the ſame place of *Hoſea*, namely by taking *away his gifts*, (or, which is the ſame, ſuffering them to be ſpent till they come to nothing) *and then diſcovering her lewdneſs in the ſight of her lovers*, and preſſing her ſo with his judgments that none deliver her out of his hand (as the Prodigal was made ſo poor and vile that no man regarded him to give him husks with the Swine) and ſo, *deſtroying all her former gifts and rewards from her lovers, take away all her mirth*, and all that might ſupport her, *&c.*

3. By preſenting and bringing to the ſinners minde in this ſad loſt condition, himſelf in his goodneſs and grace in Chriſt, drawing the ſoul out from its holes and caves, its fields, and bruitiſh ſwiniſh company into the wilderneſs, a ſolitary, mournful, repenting ſtate; and there he is ſaid properly *to finde her*, as it is ſaid, *Hoſ.* 13. 5. *I did know thee in the wilderneſs, in the land of great drought*, which is in *Deut.* 32. 10. *He found him in a deſert, forſaken land, in the waſte howling Wilderneſs*, &c. And in *Jer.* 2. 24. *The wilde Aſſe in the wilderneſs that ſnuffs up the winde at her pleaſure, and*

none

none can turn her away in her occaſion, with whom all that ſeek her will not weary themſelves any longer; yet in her moneth (ſayes he) *they ſhall finde her:* that is, in the time of trouble, when her pains come upon her, and God is brought to her minde, then ſhe will ſay, Ariſe and ſave us, as *ver.* 27. And indeed when this is hearty and earneſt, as here, then he may be ſaid to be found, and in the next ſtep to it, for he is properly found.

4. In Gods ſeeing or taking notice of him, in his thinking on, and returning to him; for that's it in which a thing is properly found, when that that could not be eſpyed or ſeen any where before falls ſuddenly into the ſight, and is ſeen and diſcerned. Now his eye is more properly ſet upon the creature when he mindes, regards, and notes it, ſo as to obſerve it by way of gracious reſpect to it: as in *Iſa.* 57. 18. *I have ſeen his wayes, and I will heal him:* and ſo he is ſaid to hear them then too, *Jer.* 31. 18, 19, 20. *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf, thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the*

yoke; *turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God: Surely after I was returned, I repented,* &c. Then God ſees and hears the ſinner when he begins to bemoan himſelf, and repent, and look towards God, and then, *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleaſant childe; for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will ſure have mercy upon him ſaith the Lord.* And then a repenting ſinner being thus found is and may be ſaid to be a perſon found.

1. In the way to God, thinking of him in Chriſt, deſiring after him, hoping that he may finde help and mercy with him, reſolving to return to him, and putting ſuch reſolutions of repentance into practice, humbling himſelf in the belief of his goodneſs, and hope of mercy, as is ſeen: And herein.

2. In the eye, reſpect and gracious obſervance of the Lord, having reſpect to him: as *Iſa.* 66. 2. *To that man will I look that is poor, and trembleth at my word.* He *reſpecteth the lowly, but the proud he knows afar off,* Pſal. 138. 6. ſuch as think they can live without him.

3. In

3. In the heart or compassions of the Lord, there he is found. He *saw him and had compassion upon him*, to pitty his misery, hear his bemoanings: help his infirmities. *I will sure have mercy upon him*, as before, in *Jer.* 31. 20.

4. In the arms of the Lord, who *meets him speedily, falls upon his neck, and kisses or embraces him.* Now he is found indeed when he hath him in his arms, in the inclosures of his grace, gracious power, and protection, and promises.

5. In his dear Son. In whom he saw and thought upon his Fathers goodness, and through whom he received life and motion towards him, resolutions, and actual performances of faith and repentance towards him, and came to him, but now is instated into him, and declaredly accepted in him the beloved, *Made in Christ Jesus*; 1 Cor. 1. 30. Ephes. 1. 6. found in him, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. and then he is more fully and formally found when in and through him accepted: So was *Cornelius* before an actual, positive, and explicite knowledge of him, and enwrapping him about as it were with an explicite discovery of him, and giving in the

justification, forgiveness of sins, life, and peace in him as explicitly believed on by him, his prayers, and tears, were accepted before through him, and upon his account; but then he was more properly found in him, when he was so invested with the knowledge of him and righteousness in and by him, in the actual receit of remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost in his Name believed on; and so the Prodigal here in the best robe put upon him: and then,

6. In his Fathers house, received in by his Father, set amongst his Children; and having there liberty and room again to go in and out amongst them: Now he is found indeed of God, and his people too. And thus a repenting returned sinner, of a lost, perisht man, is found again, yea, found now safe, because in his Fathers love, acceptance, approbation in Christ, and in his Fathers house and tuition, and sound; because now healed of all hurts before-got, by his Fathers compassion and goodness extended to him. Whereupon follows,

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The third Branch opened, and the whole applyed.

THAT his condition now is such, as its meet to be rejoyced for and in. *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.* To be rejoyced for, by making merry each other as it were, and by being glad in inward heart, and outward demonstration, in entertaining him with a Feast, and with Musick, the voice of Thanksgiving and Melody; and with Dancing, Exulting, leaping, or orderly moving our selves in shewing our gladness, and setting forth the Praises of God: Yea, this is a thing meet to be joyed in, and for.

1. By God his Father himself, for so he puts in himself here, not only *its meet that* thou shouldst make merry, but *we*, I and thou too. *A wise Son makes a glad Father*, Prov. 10. 1. *My son be wise,*

and

and make my heart glad that I may answer him that reproacheth me, Prov. 27. 11. Though this Son had done foolishly in departing and running away from his Father, and when he began to be an hungry, in joyning himself to a Citizen of that Countrey? yet he did wisely, when coming to himself he repented and returned; and the Father here rejoyces, and hath wherewith to answer his other Son reproaching him: So also in *Prov.* 23. 15, 16. *My Son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoyce, even mine: yea, my reins shall rejoyce when thy lips speak right things.* Its meet a Father be glad of his Sons welfare.

2. By his Brother or Brethren, it *is meet we should make merry and be glad*; not only I, but thou also with me, for should not brethren love one another, and be glad they may enjoy one anothers company in health and safety? and therefore be glad when any of them escapes any danger, and the more, the greater the danger was that is escaped? and then.

3. By the Servants also that attend on them. *There is joy in the presence of*

the

the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, ver. 10. and *I have no greater joy* (saith one of Gods Servants in the Gospel) *then to hear or see that my Children walk in the truth*; yea, and to repent and turn from swervings too: so the Apostle *Paul*, the Servant of Christ. *Now I rejoyce*, saith he, *not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry to repentance*, 2 Cor. 7. 9.

4. But most of all by the sinner himself, made alive again, and found of his Father, and in his Fathers house amongst his Brethren, whether in the lower rooms while here, or in the upper chambers, as the *Thief*, (or Malefactor) that day he dyed, was in Paradise. *O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy*, &c. Psal. 107. 1, 2.

Quest. *But why is it meet to make merry and be glad for such a one, upon such an occasion? surely there is great and good reason for it:*

Answ. 1. Because of the goodness of the condition it self in which a repentant

tant ſinner is found, or brought into. Good things are matters of joy when had and enjoyed; here's nothing but good in this ſtate, good it is in it ſelf, and good to all others; therefore worthy joy, and mirth, and gladneſs.

1. Good in it ſelf: for,

1. It is a ſtate of life, and life is good in it ſelf, and therefore matter of promiſe, which it would not be if not good: for we do not uſe to promiſe what we judge bad: and if God judged life bad, or it were ſo in it ſelf, God would not promiſe it. *He is juſt, he ſhall ſurely live*, Ezek. 18. 9. Its matter of prayer, Oh *that Iſhmael might live before thee*, Gen. 17. 18. *Let Reuben live, and not dye*, Deut. 33. 6. And its matter of praiſes, *Pſal.* 119. 175. *Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee, and let thy judgements help me.* Yea, its a matter of Chriſts purchaſe that he came into the world to procure and give; yea, the principal matter, *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, John 10. 10. and therefore ſurely life is good, a great good: *Yea, skin for skin* (ſaid the adverſary) *and all*

that

that a man hath will he give for his life: 'Tis uſually ſo, but eſpecially ſpiritual life, the life of the ſoul in Chriſt, and ſo in the favour of God is good. *The life* which is *in the path of righteouſneſs, wherein is no death*, Prov. 12. 28. And this is the ſtate the ſinner is taken into upon repentance, and coming back to God in Chriſt, as in *Ezek.* 18. 17. *If the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed, and keep all my ſtatutes, and do that that is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live: he ſhall not dye*: and ver. 22. *He ſhall live.* So in Chap. 33. 11. *Turn and live.* Being brought back to God in and by Chriſt (the only way by which any can come, or be brought to God, *John* 14. 6, 7.) he lives in and by Chriſt, who *is the Reſurrection and the life*, ſo as that *whoever believes in him*, whatever he be, or hath been, *though never ſo dead, yet he ſhall live, and living and believing in him, he ſhall live for ever*, John 11. 25, 26. And ſo its ſaid here, He is alive again.

Object. *Oh! but the repenting Malefactor upon the Croſs dyed for all his repentance.*

Anſw.

Answ. As to his body he did, and all must; and that as so inflicted on him was the fruit of his sin, not of his return: yea, as to its sentence a means of his return from his sin; but that which was the fruit of his repentance, was, that he lived to God. *Being judged according to men in the flesh, but living according to God in the Spirit*, 1 Pet. 4. 6. and so his soul lived and went that day to Paradise, and lived for ever. His death as it was the fruit of his sinning was matter of sadness; but as it was a means to his repentance, so it was to be joyed in; but much more the life of his soul, and eternal life (promised to, and to be enjoyed by both soul and body, in the Resurrection) the fruits or consequents of repentance are matters of unspeakable joy and gladness: if a Childe fall into the fire, will not the mother rejoyce to see him snatched out of it, and live safely, and in health again, though with causing the scorched skin to peel off? surely yes.

2. It is a state of being found, a found state, a state wherein a sinner is not lost from God, and his goodness to his

Bre-

Brethren and fellow Servants, but is found in and with them, known, owned, and approved with God and with men & Angels of one minde of God, and so is with them, under the gracious approving knowledge of God, and under his gracious care, counsel, defence, &c. and in unity with all that are well and happy, found in a large and spacious house in and under the enjoyment of, or title to large Provisions, richest Furniture, sweetest Relations and Friends, abiding and eternal safety, and satisfactions. *Come to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to be of them*; as Ephes. 2. 19, 20. and to an *innumerable company of Angels, to have fellowship* with them, and protection by them, *to the General Assembly, and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven*, as owned of God, and inrolled as heirs of heaven, and its infinite glory and happiness, to be with, and of them, *to the spirits of just men made perfect*, to be their brethren followers of their faith, and to be in the hope of, and to have the title and way to their enjoyments, *and to God the judge of all*, to

pro-

protect, bleſs, reward, and ſatisfie them, *And to Jeſus the mediator of the New Teſtament, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaks better things then the blood of Abel,* to be prepared for, kept, and brought to the enjoyment of the Glory of God by him, and in the vertues of that his precious blood. Yea, *coming to Chriſt the living ſtone they are made living ſtones too, and are built up a ſpiritual houſe, and an holy Prieſthood,* &c. *A choſen generation, a royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, and a peculiar people to ſhew forth the praiſes of God, who hath called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light,* Heb. 12. 23, 24. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Can there be a better ſtate and condition? in a word, its the ſame condition that the perſon is in, that keeps to God, and never departs from him; a ſtate of Son-ſhip to God, of being ever with God, and having intereſt in, and benefit by all that is his: for as *Bleſſed is the man that is undefiled in the way, and walks in the Law of the Lord*: ſo alſo, *Bleſſed is the man whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered,* Pſal. 119. 1. and 32. 1, 2. *Bleſſed is he to whom the*

Lord

Lord will not impute sin, &c. Both of them are in a blessed state; and what can be better then blessed? wherin is a removing of all evil, and an estating in all that is good, either as to the way to it, or end attained. Such is this condition. Good in it self, and then its

2. Its good to others also: as

1. To God, in such a sense as any thing besides himself can be good to him, not as if it added to him, who is infinitely perfect in himself, and not to be added to by any thing, but good to him as its pleasing to him, as a satisfaction to his love, an attainment of his desired end in all his goodness expressed and testified towards the sinner, at least so far as he hath attained. *He would have all men saved, he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn and live.* He hath pleasure then that a wicked man turn and live, *Ezek.* 33. 11: 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. That's good then to God that's pleasing, or a pleasure and delight to him. That that he is glorified in and by, even his mercy and truth in Christ are herein glorified, *Psal.* 115. 1. Such a person will praise him. *The living, the li-*

living, they shall celebrate or shew forth thy praises, Psal. 115. 17, 18. Isa. 38. 19. Yea, and others will glorifie God in and for such a person as they did in Saint *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 23. and his house and kingdom is hereby increased, and *the Kings honour is in the multitude of his Subjects*, Prov. 14. 28.

2 To Christ also upon all the same accounts. Its matter of joy to him when what he labours for, and in, succeeds. That his Plantation thrives, and that any tree of his setting revives, and prospers, *John* 15. 12.

3. To the Holy Spirit; for as God is love, and Christ the Son of the Father in love and truth: so the Spirit is the Spirit of Love, and its a rejoycing to love, when it hath what it may love, and when what it loves succeeds, and is well: as he is grieved and vexed in his peoples ill-doing and rebelling: so he is delighted in their well-doing and repenting, *Isa.* 63. 10, 11. *Ephes.* 4. 30.

4. To the holy Angels, who loving men and their good, desire it, and in such persons have their desire answered, and the number of their blessed compa-

ny

ny in a ſort increaſed, *Luke* 15. 10. *Heb.* 12. 23.

5. To their Brethren, whoſe number is added to, or preſerved from being in ſuch diminiſhed, and whoſe ſpiritual deſires, breathings, prayers, and endeavours are herein anſwered; and they may have benefit by them in mutual fellowſhip with them if here ſurviving: or if not yet edification however in the beholding or here-ſay of the Vertues of Chriſt, and his Sacrifice, and the power of the Grace of God appearing in them in their dying.

6. Yea, to all other men its good, either as making them fit to pitty, pray for, and ſeek the good of them, and be uſeful to them, or as, affording inducement to them, to repent alſo and ſeek God, and hope in him; and it cannot but be

7. Good to a mans ſelf ſuch, and ſo happy a condition as in which is the confluence of all good to a man.

Now that that is good, and ſo good, ſurely it is meet that all that are good, and love what's good, or may have good by it ſhould rejoyce, and be glad for it.

And

And ſo God makes this mirth here, and a feaſt hereat for all that can and will be glad of it; and we ſhould make merry by exhorting and exciting all to gladneſs by all means we can upon ſuch occaſions.

2. It is meet we ſhould make merry and be glad on ſuch an occaſion, becauſe of the relation the ſinner ſtood and ſtands in to us, to God and his people eſpecially. *This thy Brother*, and ver. 24. *This my Son.* Love will lead us to be glad for ſtrangers or enemies if they come to good, to what's truly good, to what's ſpiritually and eternally good: but how much more for a mans own near relation. *The Lord rejoyces in his works*, the works of his hands, as being all, as his works good, and holy, and juſt; but how much more in man his choice work, for whoſe ſake he made, and to whoſe good he ordered all the reſt! made in his own likeneſs and image, and ſo his Son: but yet how much more for and in thoſe that were and are again Sons in his Son, in his only begotten and beloved Son: Thoſe whom he begot with ſuch deſire and love as through the gift

of

of his Son, and his Son bare and brought forth with the travail of his ſoul poured out to Death, and brought to be his Sons by the Word thereof, and by his Spirit breathing therein; and whom he nouriſht up with the fleſh and blood of his Son, and vertues thereof? Should not the Father rejoyce and make merry to ſee his Son, and ſo dear a Son in a good condition? And ſhould not Brethren make merry and be glad at the preferment, good, or recovery of their Brethren! Would it not be unnatural for Brethren, not to rejoyce in love for one another when they do well, very well, and one as well as another, and all well! Shall the Angels, not ſo related to us Men, be glad of our good; and ſhall not we Men for one another, and eſpecially for ſuch as have been our whole Brethren, and ſo are! Yea, and ſhould not all the Servants be glad of the happineſs of their Maſters Sons, with whom they injoy their happineſs and livelihood and about whom, and whoſe good, the Maſter appoints them their choiſe imployment! It was meet we ſhould make merry and be glad, for it is

my Son and thy Brother; what though he hath been a bad husband? he is not so now: What though a spend thrift, an evil liver? then indeed we had cause of sadness; but now he that was so is reclaimed, and he is still my Son, thy Brother: That, a Second.

3. *It is meet*, &c. Because of the sad estate he hath been in, and from which he is raised again, and brought to this condition. He was a Son, a Brother of whom there was great fears, and for whom we had great grief and exercise; he hath been long away and far from us, there was little hope that we should ever see him again; he hath been in great poverty, necessity, and straits; he hath been pinched with hunger, dryed up with thirst, naked and destitute of clothing and harbour, ready to famish and perish with want; and this in a strange Country, where all were set to ruin him, none to help him: Its a thousand to one but he had perisht and been lost for ever, and yet from this strange and sad case he is at length returned safe again, and should we not make merry for the good of such a relation, that

hath

hath been in ſuch perils of death and drowning, or of periſhing by the moſt cruel and lingring death, that of Famine. It's true, he is not come into a better condition in it ſelf than thoſe that abide and walk with God, but he is come to it out of a worſe than ever they were in; and therefore hath reaſon hereafter to be more wary to keep home, and may walk more thankfully and dutifully, becauſe under the ſenſe and mindfulneſs of the greater mercy to him. And as we had more abundant cauſe of grief and fear for him, ſo we have now anſwerably more abundant cauſe to make merry, and be glad for him, as we are moſt glad of the ſafety of ours, after the greateſt danger of utter looſing them: That's a Third.

4. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry*, &c. If we conſider whence this hath happened to him that he is come ſafe home again. It's the Lords own work, and a work of more abundant grace, marvellous and miraculous power and mercy to convert a ſinner, after he hath been with God and departs from him again. And as *God rejoyces in his*

works generally, *Pſal.* 104. 31. ſo eſpecially in thoſe that are *works of his mercy*, becauſe *mercy pleaſeth and delights him*, Mich. 7. 18. and yet more in thoſe in which his mercy is moſt glorified by him. And ſurely, as all the works of God are wonderful and glorious, and its meet we ſhould have pleaſure in them, ſo eſpecially thoſe in which he is moſt brightly diſcovered, and his glory (that is all matter of gladneſs) is moſt of all diſplayed. And ſuch is his mercy in converting and calling back from death, and giving pardon and life to a rebellious offender; and therefore it's meet, that all fleſh ſhould bleſs his holy name in this and ſuch works as theſe eſpecially, and that all his people who have thereby more abundant occaſion of beholding and cauſe of admiring his goodneſs, and whoſe hearts may thence receive moſt incouragement to obey and ſerve him, have cauſe to rejoyce in him, and in his doings herein. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad.*

5. It was meet in reſpect of its tendency and fruit, which is the glorifying of God, and drawing in other ſinners

to

to repentance, that they also may be saved; the most acceptable thing to God, 1 *Tim.* 2 3. *David* being pardoned for and healed of his great sins of Adultery and Murther, delivered from blood-guiltiness, *Would teach transgressors the way, so as sinners should be converted to him, his tongue should sing aloud of* (and greatly commend) *Gods righteousness*, though he could thenceforth less speak of his own: *His lips being again opened should shew forth Gods praises*, Psal. 51. 13, 14, 15. As the turning away of good men from God by sin doth mightily dishonour God, and stumble and hurt others; so the returning of backsliders to God, tends much to the glorifying him, and doing good to others, by their examples before them, and confessions, and praises of God to them; strengthening those that are in God's way, and recalling others that stray from it, yea, and incouraging them to Repentance: That's a fifth Reason.

Use.

And this consideration also in its several Branches may be of divers usefulness to us: as,

1. It magnifies and tends to provoke us to magnifie the greatness of the grace and mercy of God to Mankind, that hath prepared, and made a way in, and by his Son Jesus Christ; that rebellious sinners and back-sliders from him, might be brought back again to him, and be received of him. *There is with the Lord plenteousness of redemption*, so as he can, and *will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.* He can forgive and revive such as none else can, or will. Such as being put away for Whoredome, have joyned themselves to others that might not be received again by the Law, yet he can receive and forgive such; and declares himself ready to it also, through Jesus Christ, *Jer.* 3. 1, 2. 8. 12, 13. *All things that* could not be atoned, or *from which men might not be justified by the Law of* Moses, *all that believe in Jesus Christ are justified from by him*, Act. 13. 38, 39. And he can call, and revive, and quicken the most dead souls through *the seven Spirits of God* that are in him, *Revel.* 3. 1. And so it leads us,

2. To

2. To magnifie, and commend the exceeding preciousnes of the blood of Christ, and the fountain opened therein, *For the house of* David, *and inhabitants of* Jerusalem, *to wash in, for sin, and for uncleanness*, Zech. 13. 1. The house of *David* we know was guilty of blood, and the City *Jerusalem* a bloody, idolatrous City, compared to a woman to be judged for breaking Wedlock, and for shedding Innocent Blood, Adultery, and Murther, *Ezek.* 16. 38. and yet this fountain in Christ's most pretious blood will extend to, and is vertuous for the washing them. *God hates the bloody and deceitful man.* *David* was guilty of both, and yet *in the multitude of God's mercies he durst go into God's house*, and appear before him, *Psal.* 5. 6, 7. And praying to God to wash him from those sins, saith, *That if he would purge him with Isop, and wash him, he should be whiter than the snow*, Psal. 51. 7, 8. And the like is promised upon their repentance to the Princes and People of *Jerusalem* and *Judah*, though compared to the Princes of *Sodome* and people of *Gomorrah* for badness, *Isa.* 1. 10, 16, 17.

Such is the vertue of the blood of Chriſt, that in coming to it, and bathing in it, in turning to God, and believing in his Son, it can make a City that is an *harlot, and full of murthers white as wool or ſnow*, ver. 21. *He can waſh away the filth of the daughters of* Sion, *and purge the blood of* Jeruſalem *in the midſt thereof, by the ſpirit of judgment, and the ſpirit of burning*, Iſa. 4. 4. judging them and helping them to judge themſelves, and burning up what is reproved by him. Oh! how precious is Chriſt then, and how much to be prized by us? who when the richeſt man in the world, though the greateſt King or Potentate, cannot give a price to God ſufficient for one mans ſoul to ranſome it, though guilty of the leaſt ſins, yet he was judged of God (whoſe judgment is according to truth) a ſufficient ranſome for all men, 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. And there is vertue enough in his blood to obtain ſparing for the greateſt ſinners, and mercy to be extended to convert, and grace to pardon them being converted to him. Being made *a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Iſrael*, (a people guilty of

of greatest sins against the greatest mercies) *and forgiveness of sins*, Act. 5. 31. Oh! let us magnifie and run into this fountain, to which also God in his mercy by Christ calls the greatest sinners.

3. It leads to hope in God for backsliding and sinful brethren (and much more for them that never so tasted God's goodness, and sinn'd against such tasts) and in that hope to seek and endeavour their conversion; and upon repentance *to receive them as God for the sake of Christ received and receiveth us*, Rom. 15. 6, 7. not to cast off the care of them, and say with *Cain*, *Am I my Brother's keeper*, or up-seeker? But rather as the Apostle says, *With meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the Devil, who are taken captives by him at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. Yet herein praying for, and asking discretion; some rebuking sharply, and with some dealing gently, as *Jude* saith ver 22, 23. *Of some have compassion making a difference, and others saving*

with fear (or terrour) pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. As some the Apostles gave *up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

4. It may provoke such as have sinned, and done shamefully, and wickedly, even after grace received, as *Peter* and *David* did; not to despare, but to look back, back again to God, and hope in his mercy, and waite for it in his ways through Jesus Christ. *Confessing and forsaking their sins that they may finde mercy,* Prov. 28. 13. For *God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn and live.* And therefore *let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn to the Lord for he is gracious, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon,* Ezek. 33. 11. *Isa.* 55. 7. However, much or great evil, or sin men have done, its not the way to be helped to despair of help, or to seek for it elsewhere, then in turning to God by Jesus Christ; for whithersoever else a man turn, he *goes after vain things, and things that cannot profit,* but

in-

in God and Christ as is said, there is mercy and help. *Let Israel* therefore (though great sinners against greatest mercies) *hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy, and with him is plenteousness of redemption*, Psal. 130.6,7. 1 *Sam.* 12, 19,20. but delay not to turn to him, least he cut us off in his wrath. *To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, least ye be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Delays in this case are dangerous, for what's our life! and in whose hands, but his that is offended by us?

5. Yet let none presume upon this therefore, *To sin that grace may abound*; for though grace is more abundantly declared in saving and pardoning great sinners; yet they *that therefore do evil that good may come thereof*, if God leave them to sink and perish in their sinful presumption, *their damnation is just*, Rom. 3.8. because there is forgiveness with God, so as in his hands to dispense or withhold it, therefore *he is to be feared* and not presumptiously sinn'd against. *Psal.* 130. 4. In this respect of calling back and shewing mercy to such offenders:

He

He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, & whom he will he hardens. The Chirurgeons greateſt skill is ſhewed in healing the moſt ſhattered bones or moſt deſperate wounds. Yet, who but a mad-man would therefore to prove his skill go break his bones in pieces, or run upon ſword points on purpoſe, when as if he be healed he will be but in the ſame ſound ſtate happily as before, and might have been without theſe pains and ſmarts they will put him to. Yea, and he runs a deſperate hazzard of being never healed, it depending meerly upon the Chirurgeon's good pleaſure.

6. If it be meet for us to rejoyce and make merry for the reſtoring of ſinners, and God alſo call upon us thereto: then alſo,

1. It faults thoſe that neither indeavor it when they be fallen, nor are glad for it when reſtored, but rather murmur at it, and are offended like as the Phariſees here in this Chapter, were either for ſeeking ſuch that they might be reſtored, or receiving them when reſtored, ſo far are they from rejoycing at it. If thou thy ſelf that doſt ſo haſt an intereſt

in

in Christ, why shouldest thou be offended at thy brothers restauration and reception, and not rather desire it, yea, endevour and rejoyce in it; there's never the less room for thee in God's house, nor never the less chear for thee for the multitude of them that dwell and feed therein. Here the more the merrier, and never a whit the lesser chear; for as we have shewed the bread of Christ's giving is living, growing, and enduring bread; that is no more consumed by being eaten and fed on and digested, then the Sun is (perhaps far less) by being daily looked upon, or the light of it walked in: And if God please to shew mercy to any great sinners, why shouldest thou snuff at it, and envy it; *Is thine eye evil, because Gods is good?* Oughtest thou not rather to rejoyce to see a soul saved from destruction, and that God is so gracious to us, who are all of us sinful enough to deserve a thousand destructions at his hands, than to be offended at it? Is it a light matter for a soul to go to hell? what pleasure is that for thee, or what profit in it? surely they are more cruel than

than Tigers and the most savage beasts, that would wish their worst enemies, or the worst of sinners such a mischief, and not rather desire and endeavour to prevent it, and rejoyce to see any good ground to think that God hath prevented it upon any; and yet how often is it found, that not only profane and wicked men take delight in making others sin, and then make a sport and jest of it, being savage Heathens under the denomination of Christians: But even believers in Christ, and seekers of him, are too careless of their brethrens souls, while they matter not if *for their meat*, or drink, or some foolish custome, or will, or pleasure *their brother, for whom Christ dyed do perish*, 1 Cor. 8. 11. Rom. 14. 25. How far is any unlike therein to Christ! who thought it not too much to lay down his precious life to save us, and we will scarce lay down a toy or trifle, our will or pleasure, a fashion or fancy to save our brethren, and bring them from misery to endless happiness! but it is meet when God reclaims by any means, or shews mercy to any sinners, especially to Prodigals and notorious offen-

offenders; yea, though he give them some more signal testimony of his favour to them upon their returning, then he hath perhaps to our selves at any time (which was the thing stomacked in the Parable) to make merry and be glad for it; and if so, then

2. Let us be exhorted to such a demeanour and carriage in such cases. God is sometimes affording such instances of his great mercy and goodness, that we might take notice of him, and give him the glory of it, and set forth his praises. He sometimes suffers such as profess his truth, and have some right understanding also of it, and affection to it to fall into temptations, and thereby into great sins and sufferings, and yet shews his mercy on them to their salvation, by bringing them into sufferings for their sins he sometimes awakens them (as the Prodigal here) so effectually to repentance, that they remember, and turn to him, and finde mercy with him; though indeed there be too few such penitents to be found, more there are that imitate this Prodigal in wandring from God, and spending his gifts,

and

and their receits in riotous courſes and ſinful converſations, then imitate him in converting & returning unto God again, which is a matter worthy lamentation, & ſurely the ſeverity of God may be ſeen in part therein that he gives up ſo many that wander from him to their hardneſs, and impenitency ſo as to perſiſt to Death and periſh therein. Though God alſo hath a good and gracious end therein to others, for therein he is admoniſhing us to beware of preſumption and preſumptuous ſinning; that ſeeing *he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*, in giving them repentance in ſuch caſes, *and whom he will he hardens* for their preſumptions, we may ſtand in awe, and take heed of abuſing his goodneſs to any in ſuch a way, as to ſay, *Let us do evil that good may come thereof, ſin that grace may more abound. God hath given repentance to ſome that have fallen ſowly, and ſhewed them mercy in receiving them again, therefore I will be bold alſo to give way to my corruptions, and take the pleaſures of ſin for a while, I hope God will be merciful alſo to me and recover, and receive me again, and I ſhall not periſh therein.* Surely the ſeeing many ſo *turn away, as not to re-*

turn, but backſlide by a perpetual backſliding, holding faſt deceit and refuſing to return, as *Jer.* 8. 45. might keep us from adventuring on ſo deſperate a reſolution. Thus the Apoſtle teacheth us to improve a like conſideration in *Rom.* 11. 22, 23. *Be not high minded, but fear, for if God ſpared not the natural Branches,* (that were hardned, blinded, and broken off for their unbelief, *ve.* 7. 20.) *take heed leaſt he alſo ſpare not thee. Behold then the goodneſs and the ſeverity of God on them that fell ſeverity, but on thee goodneſs, if thou continue in his goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be broken off.* See the like uſe alſo made of the like ſeverity towards the Fathers that ſinned in the wilderneſs, and periſhed there through God's diſpleaſure, 1 *Cor.* 10. 1, 2. 10. 11. they were our *admonitions* to provoke ſuch as *think they ſtand to take heed leaſt they fall*; not preſuming that, though they throw themſelves voluntarily into ſin, yet they ſhall riſe, or be raiſed up again, becauſe they are God's people, and he hath loved, and loves them, and being once loved they muſt needs be always loved (as ſome miſread

and

and abuſe that ſaying in *Joh.* 13. 1. contrary to *Iſa.* 63, 9, 10, 11. *Hoſ.* 9. 15.) and ſo that however they ſin they cannot periſh. A perilous temptation, that hath cauſed many to ſtumble, and fall to their deſtruction. Surely our Lord Jeſus, who was the Son of God in the moſt proper ſenſe, and the moſt ſure of his love and favour, even in the manhood; yet would not liſten to ſuch a voice of the Tempter, *to caſt himſelf from the pinacle of the Temple*, preſuming it was impoſſible for him to be hurt, becauſe the promiſes belonged to him, of which this was one, that *God would give his Angels charge over him to bear him up in their hands, that he ſhould not at any time daſh his foot againſt a ſtone.* But knowing that God's promiſes are annexed to his ways, and that his keeping them was it that ſhould be attended with his being kept in them, he repelled the temptation with having diligent reſpect to God's Commandement bidding man, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, Mat. 6 6, 7. in which he hath ſet us a good example that we might follow his ſteps, and ſure he is a preſumptuous fool that

that durst venture to go where his Leader, being wiser, and stronger than he would not venture before him.

But yet when the goodness of God is so exercised and put forth in his mercy to any as to give repentance, and restore them again from their falls and bruises (as *God is able to graffe in again* what is broken off, and *raise up what is fallen*, even of those that are distinguished from, and opposed to the *Election that hath obtained*, Rom. 11. 7, 14, 23.) let us be glad and rejoyce therein, both for their good in charity to them, and that God is affording such a motive and incouragement to others that have sinned and are bruised thereby, and lye pining away in their sins to rise again in repenting. In such cases its meet that we should make merry, and be glad as is here said, and not with the Pharasees or Pharasaical Saints, murmur at God's mercy and goodness towards them, whither it be that he give them repentance, and restore them to us here to live with us, and testifie their repentance by a better and more heavenly conversation afterwards, as *David*, *Peter*, *Manasses*, *Mary Magdalene*, and others did:

Or

or that he awaken them to repentance by bringing upon them some signal shame and punishment to death, as befell the Malefactor upon the Crosse crucified with Christ: And as God is sometime pleased to shew his goodness to others brought to like shame and death, for the like, or as bad, or worse offences.

I know some fooliſh or Pharaſaical ones are apt to ſtrange at God's dealings ſometimes in ſuch caſes; as if God could not be ſo gracious to ſuch offenders, as if it ſtood not with his holineſs, and eſpecially if they be ſoon comforted, and pretend to great peace and joy in their death having done and committed ſome hainous offences; as Adulteſy, Murther, Felony, &c. They are apt to ſuſpect they are but deluded perſons, and Satan that inticed and deceived them to commit ſuch ſins, hath again deceived them to make them think God is merciful to them, and forgives and accepts them. To whom I would ſay, It's poſſible for Satan to delude ſouls after that manner, as to make them preſume of mercy without ſerious and hearty repentance of

their ſins, as *Agag*, who ſaid, *Surely the bitterneſs of Death was paſt* with him, when he was going to his execution, 1 *Sam.* 15. 32. and I wiſh many do not ſo delude themſelves: I am afraid it is ſo. But yet it's not good to either abridge the mercies of God towards, nor the merits of Chriſt for the ſouls of greateſt ſinners, ſo as to deſpair that ſuch may be converted heartily, and received again certainly, and ſometimes ſuddainly, or to judge their repentance and conſolations when there is no manifeſt appearing ground for ſo doing; much leſs when there are appearing evidences of the contrary.

That God may both convert and forgive upon converſion greateſt offenders many things may evince, as the Parable alſo implies: as,

1. It is but ſuitable to God's oath, who hath ſworn *that he hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn and live*, Ezek. 33 11. as we noted before; and to his calling the worſt of ſinners; the *ſimple ſcorners* and *fools that hate knowledge*, Prov. 1. 22, 23. And thoſe that are compared to the *Princes*

of

of *Sodom* and the *people of Gomorrha*, Isa. 1. 10, 15, 16. &c, promising forgiveness to such upon their repentance; yea, and *back sliders* that have come toward him, and gone back again, promising to *heal their backslidings*, Jer. 3. 12, 14, 22. *Hos.* 14. 4.

2. It is suitable to the end of Christ's coming, who came into the world to save sinners, even chief of sinners, even such as are *Murtherers of Fathers, Murtherers of Mothers, Menkillers, Whoremongers, Defilers of themselves with Mankind, Man-stealers, Lyers, Perjured persons*; yea, and those that by the Apostle are counted nothing inferior to, but rather greater than these, zealous Pharasees, that set up their own righteousness against God's in Christ, and out of false zeal persecute Christ in his truth and members, for upon that account he afterward, after mention of such notorious offenders, stiles himself *the chief of sinners*, though a Pharasee and one of the *strictest sect for Religion among the Jews*, and far from those gross fleshly abominations, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9, 10, 13, 14 15, 16. indeed nothing but the blood of Christ,

Christ, and the grace of God in him will make such sinners or any sinners else to be Saints, or cleanse them from their sins, that will as appears in 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. where such horrid offenders that had been such are said *to be washed, to be justified, to be sanctified* (which what is it but to be made Saints) *in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of God*, no sorrows, tears, or humiliations of ours can do it without *purging with hyssop* (Psal. 51. 7.) that is, with the blood and by the spirit of Christ, and that will.

3. Otherwise we must exclude from heaven those that the Scripture enrols among the Saints, if we think God cannot convert and forgive great sinners, or never doth. What was *David* but a great sinner, being guilty of acting adultery and murther, and yet I hope he was a Saint. Indeed he found many ready to say of him, *there was no help for him in God*, when God began to call him to account for his sin, as appears *Psal.* 3. 1, 2. the title whereof is a *Psalm of David when he fled from Absolon his Son*, but yet he found it otherwise, so as to rejoyce and

and glory in God, *verſ.* 3. *Thou art my ſhield, my glory, and the lifter up of my head.* Though *Abſolon's* riſing up againſt him was a puniſhment for his ſin, and a remembrance of it, yet God was ſo therein with him having repented (to ſhew the reality of his repentance, and truth of God's acceptance of him) that he was helped to carry that puniſhment of his ſin with much magnanimity. God lifted up his head when many thought (as ſome Pharaſaical Saints are apt yet to think of great ſinners, eſpecially if brought to ſhameful ſufferings for their ſins, as he then was) ſurely he muſt be lamentably diſtreſſed and dejected in his ſpirit, and hang down his head. He *lay him down and ſlept in the midſt* of his troubles, *for God ſuſtained him*; and he *would not be afraid of ten thouſand of people that had ſet themſelves againſt him round about*, ver. 5. 6. See what a ſaint-like ſpirit (yea, even under their ſufferings for their ſins) God ſometimes endues great ſinners with upon their repentance, and ſurely we may not ſay they were deluded, and therefore neither may we conclude that others are ſo, if having

having been great and notorious offenders they upon turning to God find him comforting them, yea, and filling them with expreſſions of confidence of his favour towards them, and of their ſalvation. For indeed,

4. Chriſt therefore ſuffered like a ſinner and malefactour, that ſinners (yea ſuch ſinners as deſerve and have ſhame and puniſhment here, even the Croſſe or Gallows for their juſt reward) might through him be called and brought to repentance, and dye like Saints, and be Saints in their dying, that is, have hope and joy in him, and in his ſalvation; and this was evidenced in the Croſſe, and at the death of Chriſt. For Chriſt himſelf, though the Son of God, and the moſt juſt perſon that ever was in the world, yet he dyed like a Sinner, Malefactour, Thief, or Murtherer, not onely in that he ſuffered ſuch a death as ſuch offenders uſed to be put to by men (the death of the Croſſe) but alſo in his dying, as to the manner of it, in reſpect of grief, ſorrow, agonies, that did accompany it (yet not without evidences of his righteouſneſs and hope in God his

Father.) For did not he *ſweat* through the violence of his agonies, *as it were great drops of blood trickling down to the ground?* And did he not cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me!* As bearing upon himſelf the puniſhment of ſuch capital offences, though upon our account, not his own; that ſuch as are guilty of ſuch offences, and deſerve ſuch ſorrows, agonies, and rejections of God, might through him have hope and comfort in God in their dyings, though of violent deaths by legal puniſhments, as was ſeen in the Malefactor that ſuffering with him dyed like a Saint. We finde no ſuch matter teſtified of him, no agonies nor exclamations as his ſins deſerved; but on the contrary, rebuking his fellow ſufferer for his reproaching Chriſt, acknowledging the juſtneſs of their ſufferings, and our Saviours innocency; and praying Chriſt to remember him when he came into his kingdom, he heard this comfortable word (which doubtleſſe ſtrengthened his confidence, and gave him full aſſurance of his ſalvation.) *Verily I ſay unto thee, this day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* Surely this

this was written for an incouragement, even for ſuch offenders alſo to hope in God by Jeſus Chriſt, and betake themſelves to him for mercy, in an humble acknowledgement of their offences, and of his power to forgive and help them; which that they alſo may obtain of him, (even to the giving them large confidence in him, and full aſſurance of their ſalvation.) Chriſt's graciouſneſs to him doubtleſs doth teſtifie, that none may ſay, what ſhould ſuch hainous ſinners dye like Saints? though yet in one ſenſe ſuch dye not as Saints; while they glory not in, nor juſtifie the cauſe of their death; (as thoſe that dye for Chriſt and righteouſneſs ſake may and often do) but in that regard take ſhame to themſelves, and acknowledge the righteouſneſſe of the ſhame and puniſhment ordered to them, as deſerved by them, and ſubmit themſelves thereto. And ſurely it would be too great an injury to the grace of God, and to his love to mankind, and to their welfare; and too great a derogation to the vertues of the precious blood and ſacrifice of the Lord Jeſus, to imagine that ſuch mercy

may not be ſhewed to them, that are ſo great ſinners, both as to make them, in their receit of it, hearty in their repentance, and chearful in their ſpirits under their ſufferings, in the hope of God's ſalvation.

Object. *Ah! but the ſuddainneſſe of the converſion, and ſpeedineſſe of the conſolations, and the coming ſo eaſily by them, without more drooping and humiliation makes ſome queſtion. They expect ſuch great ſinners ſhould long lye under dejection and ſadneſs, before they get a good word from God; and if not ſo, they are apt to conclude them under a deluſion, or but hypocrites in their profeſſion of joy and conſolation.*

Anſw. Truly, I would not be miſunderſtood to ſpeak in behalf of any that are not truly penitent and turned in to Chriſt, or that are daubed with untempered morter, and ſlightly healed. Yet this is evident, that ſometimes the grace of God makes quicker work in mens converſion, and he more ſpeedily comforts them thereupon, than the wiſdom of the fleſh or of man judges fitting, as by this Parable appears, as alſo by the car-

carriage of the Pharaſees toward Chriſt, often cenſuring him for his receiving ſinners while it appears they were not ſatisfied of their converſion. I conceive, had they been firſt made Pharaſees, they would not then have been offended and judged them ſinners ſtill. The woman that at *Simon's* houſe ſtood behind Chriſt, and waſhed his feet with her tears, *&c.* had not ſatisfied the Pharaſee that ſhe was a convert, for then would he not have had indignation thereat, nor ſaid in his heart, *If this man were a Prophet, he would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for ſhe is a ſinner*, Luc. 7. 39. Surely Chriſt knew her better then he did, and knew her to be a real convert, though it ſeems ſhe had not ſo publickly bewailed her ſelf, and bewailed her ſin, as to ſatisfie the Pharaſee that ſhe had left it. And what appears to have been the ſorrow and humiliation of the Malefactour? we finde nothing ſaid thereof, and yet evident tokens appear of his real converſion, and he had ſpeedy abſolution: For,

1. He rebuked his fellow for his carriage towards Christ, as if he had been turned a suddain Preacher of repentance to him, *Feareſt thou not God ſeeing we are in the ſame condemnation.*

2. He confeſſed his ſins, and juſtified the righteouſneſs of his death, ſubmitting himſelf upon that account to bear it patiently. *And we indeed juſtly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.*

3. He confeſſed Chriſt, and juſtified him in his ſufferings, and that when the whole multitude, the Princes, Prieſts, and zealous Pharaſees, and learned Rabbies, the *chief builders* did moſt of all reject him, deſpiſe, and deride him. And when he was in his deepeſt ſufferings. *But this man hath done nothing amiſs.*

4. He in this loweſt caſe of Chriſt, when his own Diſciples durſt not own him, owns and profeſſes his faith in him, that he was Lord and King; and that he ſhould have the kingdom, and ſo that God would glorifie him through and after thoſe his ſufferings, ſaying, *Lord remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.* And

5. In

5. In that faith he calls upon him as upon the Saviour of the world, or of ſinners, ſaying, *Lord remember me*, &c. as intimately profeſſing his faith, that he could forgive, and ſave, and bleſſe him.

We finde no great lamentation for his ſin, nor dejection under the ſenſe of it, but yet a better confeſſion of faith we ſcarce finde from any of the Apoſtles, who were now ſhrunk from him. Yea, *Peter* that thought to have ſtood it out, denied him. See here how ſuddainly and ſilently the grace of God may work a notable alteration as to converſion, and then ſee the ſpeedineſs of Chriſt in forgiving and comforting. He lets him not hang long drooping to his death upon the Croſſe, but preſently tells him, *This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* And was it not ſo with *David*, he *ſaid he would confeſs his ſin, and God forgave the puniſhment of it.* He ſaid but, *I have ſinned*, and *Nathan* replies, *the Lord alſo hath taken away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not dye*, Pſal. 32. 5. 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. So *Peter* had but begun to ſpeak to the Gentiles, and preſently the

Holy Ghoſt fell on them, and they ſpake with tongues, without any long humbling them firſt for the ſins of their Gentiliſm, or bringing them into the profeſſion of Judaiſm by circumciſion, as it ſeems the Diſciples of the Jews had ſome thought he ſhould have done, by their quarrelling with *Peter* for his eating with and receiving them, *Acts* 11. Yea, and *Peter* himſelf ſays, *what was I that I could withſtand God* ! as if there might be ſome ſuch leaven in him alſo as to have kept them longer out from comfort, and made them more humbled firſt before he would have received them had they been at his diſpoſing. Truly, I ſuſpect its our hypocriſies, or want of thoroughneſs in coming off from our idols, our *ſticking long in the place of the breaking forth of children*, that *increaſes* and *lengthens* our *throws* and *ſorrows*. Hoſ. 13. 13. As while *David kept cloſe his ſin his bones waxed old, and he roared out with daily diſquiets*, Pſal. 32. 1, 2. the heart that comes off ſoon and roundly from its ſin is ſooner comforted. So the compaſſionte Father here, ſo ſoon as he ſees his Sons reſolution, and finds him upon

upon his way to him; yea, *While he was yet a great way off* presently *runs to meet him*, and *falls upon his neck and kisses him.* Oh hasty Father, and too passionately fond, thinks his Pharasaical Son to shew so much love before no more humbling. He was not yet fallen on his knees scarce, and behold his Father falls upon his neck. He had not yet confessed his sins, only says he would, and the Father prevents him with his compassion, and before he could utter all he had to say, calls for the fatted calf, and the best robe to feed and cloth him, and therefore he hears of it afterward, *As soon as this thy Son was come, that hath devoured all thy substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.* And so how apt are we to say, Oh! they must be soundly humbled before we may shew them any hopes of mercy towards them; and yet indeed its hope of mercy here that humbled him, yea, the best and sweetest humbling is after the receit of mercy. Then *Mary loved much*, and wept much when *much was forgiven*, Luc. 7. 47. and so in *Ezek.* 16. 60, 61, 62, 63. when *God re-*

members his Covenant with adulterous and idolatrous *Jeruſalem*, and *makes an everlaſting Covenant* with them, then ſhe *ſhall remember her ways and be aſhamed*, &c. yet if God ſpeedily comfort men we are ready to ſay, it was ſome deluſion, they were not humbled enough.

But what is that that men call humbled enough? I fear as ſome are not humbled and aſhamed for their ſins, ſo ſome may miſtake and idolize it. If by being humbled enough they mean, ſo as to give ſatisfaction for their ſins, or make an amends for them, that's an enough that none can attain to, and therefore Chriſt *humbled himſelf to death, the death of the Croſſe for us*, Philip. 2. 7. and was not he humbled enough for us think we? it is upon the account of his humiliation, and not of ours, that God receives ſatisfaction, and forgives us, None can be ſufficiently humbled for the leaſt abuſe of any mercy to deſerve the forgiveneſs of it thereupon, but in Chriſt: God is the beſt eſtimator of our being humbled, ſo as to be fitted to receive what Chriſt's humiliation and ſufferings for us have purchaſed; and

he

he ſeems to men ſometimes to accept of a ſmall meaſure or time of humbling, as the inſtances before recited make manifeſt. And if God ſpeak peace to any upon ſhort and ſlight humbling to appearance (yea, or when he ſees us go *on frowardly, turning aſide in the way of our hearts, if he ſee our way and heal us, and create the fruits of his lips peace to us*, as *Iſa.* 57. 17, 18, 19. ſeems to import) who or what are we, that we ſhould limit or fault the Holy One! When God comforts any, how can they be dejected! would we have them play the hypocrites to humour us, counterfeit terrour and dejection when God ſpeaks peace to them? ſurely no.

Again, we vain creatures are apt to judge of mens being humbled by the outſide, the ſad countenance, plenty of tears, ſorrowful tones, wringing of hands *&c.* but God ſees the heart. And *God that knows the heart bare them witneſs* (ſays *Peter*) ſpeaking of the Gentiles, ſo ſuddainly in their uncircumciſion received in by him. And indeed we may find the Scriptures mention perſons as well humbled, and ſo as God counts them

meet

meet to be comforted: When,

1. They having ſinned do (or are willing to) ingenuouſly confeſſe, and not hide, cloke, extenuate, or plead for their ſin and filthineſſe, and turn from them. So in *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that hideth his ſins ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them finds mercy.* And in 1 *Joh* 1. 9 *If we confeſſe our ſins God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins,* and to cleanſe *us from all unrighteouſneſs* Though this confeſſion, as to particulars, is not needful to be made publike to all men, but to God. *I ſaid I would confeſſe my ſins to the Lord, and thou forgaveſt me,* Pſal. 32. 5. and in ſome caſes to ſome faithful men, *Jam.* 5. 16. that are concerned, and the heart made free to.

2. When they ſee themſelves ſo vile, and their ſins ſo hainous, that they cannot take comfort in any of their confeſſions, weepings, humiliations, faſtings, but go out of all to the grace of our Lord Jeſus, and his precious blood, *Pſal.* 51. 1, 2. 7. 16, 17. And indeed they are proud perſons that have their hope in other things, as their weepings, hum-

humiliations, &c. for they think so well of themselves as to conceive some excellency in such their acts, that they may do something in their worthiness with God, to procure his acceptance of them. It's a greater act of humility or humiliation, to see such emptiness or nothingness in them all, as to disown any resting in them, or comfort from them, but only to hope in the mercy of God, and the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ: And,

3. In case God lead them out to sorrows and griefs, bring shame and sufferings upon them, to be willing to yield our selves to God. *To be afflicted and mourn and weep,* Jam. 4. 9. *Accept the punishment of ones iniquity,* and *bear the indignation of the Lord till his wrath be past, as having sinned against him,* Mic. 7. 8, 9. This God himself makes the character of an humble heart in his sight, when in the view of him *the uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, confessing that they have walked contrary to God, and he hath walked contrary to them,* Lev. 26. 40, 41, 42. and that was the great

act

act of Christ's humbling himself for us, that he accepted the punishment of our iniquity, and yielded up himself to bear it quietly, not repining or grudging thereat. And here also in this Parable the Prodigals humiliation appears in this chiefly; that rising and coming to his Father he confesses his sin, submits himself to bear the shame of having his Father or Servants see his poor estate, and to be in any place how mean soever that his Father would put him in, though of *an hired servant*, so he might but be received. And surely, when we finde any that have been great sinners turned in from their evil ways, confessing their sin and vilenesse, and submitting to the grace of Christ to seek their absolution, rest and righteousnesse there, submitting themselves to walk in his ways, and bear his chastisements; and if in so doing (yea though there be some imperfections in their so doings) they meet with refreshings and rejoycings in God and Christ, and in the riches of his grace, we may rejoyce in their behalf, as here the family are called upon by the Father, *Let us make merry and be glad.*

Though

Though others that are prophane ſcoffers may take occaſion from ſuch falls and miſcarriages of profeſſors of the truth to jear and blaſpheme, (for which and for whom we have cauſe in ſuch caſes to be ſad and grieved) and others take occaſion thereby to abuſe God's goodneſſe and mercy to ſuch to harden themſelves in ſin: (for whom we may be ſorry alſo, warning all to take heed of ſo doing) yet in regard of God's goodneſſe in general to repentant ſinners, and in particular to this or that to whom he gives repentance, and reſtores and comforts; we may *make merry and be glad.* Eſpecially ſeeing our heavenly and gracious God and Father calls upon us ſo to do, joyning in himſelf with us, ſaying, *Let us eat and be merry*: We may by good authority do ſo; yea, it's unmannerlineſſe, and peeviſh frowardneſſe, like this elder Brothers in this Parable, to be ſullen and ſad, when God ſays, *Let us eat and be merry*, and *it's meet we ſhould make merry and be glad.* Shall not the Children and Servants be merry and chearful to ſee their Father merry and chearful, and in ſuch a rejoycing

tem-

temper? Surely its *meet then we should make merry and be glad.* Again,

CHAP. XII.

The third state, and the Text further improved in some further usefulness.

3. IT may teach us, that God is a good God, not a Spirit of sadness, or that delights in our melancholly dumpish tempers; but is a chearful, though a most holy Spirit. One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy, but sadnesse is not reckoned amongst them. Not but that the Spirit of God leads men to be sad sometimes, or rather through sadnesse to gladnesse, as of old his people through a wilderness to the land of promise, and in most cases *sorrow is better than laughter*, than a vain, foolish, worldly, frothy laughter, or affliction than prosperity for us, because *by the sadnesse of the countenance the heart is made better.* Yet sadness and sorrow are occasioned by, and spring from another cause, *viz.* sin, and its fruits: were it not for them in our

our ſelves or others, the Spirit of God would ſcarce ever lead us to be ſad. *His ways are ways of pleaſantneſſe, and all his paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. He is a chearful ſpirit, and leads to chearfulneſſe, and loves not ſullen ſowre frames and diſpoſitions. Yet we poor fooliſh creatures (as I prove ſometimes my ſelf) are apt to be either carnally, lightly, wantonly and vainly merry, or elſe on the other extream, to eſpouſe to our ſelves a ſad, glumpiſh ſpirit, a melancholly, rugged, harſh diſpoſition, or Pharaſaical face. For they *put on ſowre ſad countenances*, as too many yet do as a piece of religion, *Mat.* 6. 16. as if God delighted in ſuch Cynick or Stoick frames, formal bodily humilities, a whining voice, a *head hanging down like a bul-ruſh*, and ſuch like ſelf-tormenting carriages. No, no, God is a chearful Spirit, as having infinite joy and delight in himſelf, and in his Son, and in his works and doings, and He and his Spirit call for, and lead to chearfulneſs in his ſervice. Whence he ſaith, *Make a joyful* (not a doleful, ſad, lamentable) *noiſe to the Lord all ye lands, ſerve the*

Lord

Lord with gladneſs (he ſaith not with ſadneſs) *and come before his preſence with a ſong*. Not with a complaint, as thinking hardly of him, or being afraid of his harſhneſſe and aptneſſe to be diſpleaſed with us, *Pſal.* 100. 1. 2. He loves not to have his *Altar covered with tears, he accepts not ſuch offerings at our hands*, except in caſe of ſorrowing after God, and for our ſins, *Mal.* 2. 13. *He loves a chearful ſerver of him*, as well *as a chearful giver*, 2 *Cor* 9. 7. *In his preſence is fulneſſe of joy and pleaſures at his right hand for evermore*. And they are to reward his followers and worſhippers, *Pſal.* 16. 11. Thence thoſe many exhortations to the righteous his worſhippers to rejoyce. *Finally, my Brethren, rejoyce in the Lord*, Philip. 3. 1. and *rejoyce in the Lord evermore, and again, I ſay, rejoyce*, Phil. 4 4. and in 1 *Theſ.* 5. 16. *Rejoyce evermore*. See alſo *Pſal.* 32. 11. & 33. 1. as checking that aptneſs to be ſad that is, in his worſhippers, and ſignifying that it diſpleaſes him; and well it may, for its diſhonorable to him, occaſioning people to be offended at his ſervice and ways, as affording nothing

thing but ſadneſſe and melancholly to them that walk therein. And as ſignifying the great goodneſſe of God, and the good and abundant cauſe that God's people have of rejoycing in him. For as he is the only good God, and infinitely better than any other god, or object of truſt and worſhip; ſo there is infinitely more cauſe of gladneſs in and from him, than any where elſe. Nor have any people ſuch cauſe of rejoycing, and confidence, and boldneſſe, as thoſe that are God's, and belong to him; conſidering what they have in and with him, and what a portion and happineſſe he is to them. All other things are muddy ciſterns, in point of cauſing or affording joy and chearfulneſs. He is the free, and full, and perpetually running fountain of joy, delight, and conſolation. He gives *everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 16. We have not found God then, ſo as to know him indeed, till we meet with and have in him, yea, under and notwithſtanding all occaſions of heavineſs that befal us, *joy unſpeakable and full of glorying*, 1 *Pet* 1. 6, 7, 8. None

may

may rejoyce ſo as the righteous, they that are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk with him, ſuch may boldly ſay, *The Lord is our helper.* Come what will come, *We will not fear what can man do unto us?* Oh! ſeek we him, and the knowledge of him, till we finde it ſo as to have rejoycing evermore in him. Though we may have manifold occaſions of ſadneſſe both from within us and from without us, yet we have cauſe, being in him and walking with him, of a perpetual and evermore rejoycing. Away, away then with all hypocritical Pharaſaical thoughts, to pleaſe God in our demure looks, and ſowre countenances, as if therein ſtood our being humble before him, and let us take the adviſe and counſel of our Lord and Father, and accept his exhortation. *Let us eat and be merry. Make merry, and be glad.*

Queſt. *But what muſt we do to make merry and be glad?*

Anſw. Alas! what can we do to make merry and be glad? it muſt all come from God as the ground and Author of it. He muſt go before, and its our parts to comply with him and follow after

after him. If he frown upon us we have no cauſe to make merry, but to mourn before him till he call us to mirth, and further then he calls us to mirth and to make merry, we ſhall do well to be ſober and attend to him. But when he calls us to joy and gladneſſe, as here, and to make merry, we may in the ſupplies of his grace do ſomething; as to ſay, we may, and let us,

1, Hearken to the voice of God and his ſervants calling us thereto, and opening the cauſe thereof, and the grounds for it to us. Such as be his mercy towards ſinners, and to us and our Brethren in what he hath done for, and to both us and them. As the Servants ſay here to the elder Son, inquiring the cauſe of their mirth. *Thy Brother is come, and thy Father hath killed the fatted Calfe.* And the Father here: *It was meet we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found.* And indeed upon theſe two grounds eſpecially is the cauſe of mirth and joy; Gods goodneſſe, and our Brethrens welfare and happineſſe, as alſo our own through the

the ſame goodneſſe. His goodneſſe is declared in the feaſt made for us, and in our own and others liberty to it, or injoyments of it. And indeed the ground and cauſe of mirth, as that which is the ſpring of our happineſſe and our Bretherns too, is the feaſt that is made for us by him, and his love to us therein: *A feaſt is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry*, Eccleſ. 10. 19. That we may laugh and be merry then in the Lord, let us I ſay, firſt hear him calling us to it, and expounding it to us, and preſenting occaſions of mirth to our view. So the *Samaritans* hearing and cloſing with the Goſpel had great joy in their city, *Act.* 8. 8.

2. At our Fathers call go into the houſe to him, and be there with him, and with our Brethren. Let us not here be Schiſmaticks, and make rents from our Brethren that believe in, confeſſe, and rejoyce in God's love and grace to us in Chriſt, and walk therein. Take heed of what may ſeparate and divide us from them. For Schiſme is a work of the fleſh, and leads to deſtruction, *Gal.* 5. 20. There is a feaſt made for all, and

all

all are called to come in and eat of it; *The ſimple alſo*, and *they that have no underſtanding*, Prov. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Yea, *the poor, maimed, halt, lame, and blind*, Luc. 14. 13, 21. *The Publicans and Sinners* are received here in their coming to Chriſt the houſe wherein it is, and to his people with whom he is one, and who are his holy houſe alſo: As it is ſaid, *Whoſe houſe we are if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end*, Heb. 3. 6. with *Luc.* 15. 1, 2. Pray, let us not be ſo buſie as thoſe in that Parable *Mat.* 22. 5. about our farms, merchandiſes, or pleaſures, much leſſe be ſo wicked and rude, as they that took the ſervants that called them in, and deſpitefully intreated, and ſlew them for their labour therein. Nor ſo taken up as in the Parable, *Luc.* 14. 18. about our Oxen, Farmes, and Wives, as to think thereby to excuſe our ſelves from coming in to this feaſt. No, nor ſo ſuperciliouſly proud with this Phariſaical elder Brother in his froward diſtemper, to think the grace of God is too free, and too freely expoſed and propoſed to ſinners, and they too

eaſily

easily admitted into Christ's and his peoples fellowship, and so into God's house, and to feast therein. As if it were only fit for us, and such holy creatures as we conceit our selves to be, that are so regulated, and have lived so obediently: as if we feared the lameness, blindness, maimedness, that is, the imperfections, ignorances, and defects of the other guests and in-goers would infect us; or their looser demeanours formerly, their riotous livings and being publicans and sinners, would too much disgrace us if we should go and sit in God's house with them such vile wretches. This was the fault of this elder Son here; he was a Schismatick as he was in this temper, he would rent from his Fathers house. Why, I pray you? oh my Brother (nay, I will not own him for a Brother) that spendthrift, that hath devoured his living with harlots is intertained there, and he is too bad for me to joyn with. Thrust him out, and I will come in galdly. Let me, and such as I am have the calf to our selves, and we shall need but little intreating. He is offended at his Brothers

thers badneſſe, though not at preſent continued in. He hath repented it and hath left it. Indeed it is implyed that there is no ground of joying in or for ſinners elſe, nor are any faulty for refuſing to joyn with them, if they have not teſtified repentance. But the Servants have teſtified of him. *Thy Father hath received him ſafe and ſound.* Now yet to hang back is too incredulouſly done. Yea, though the Father himſelf alſo intreat him to come in, he ſtill objects his badneſſe, till he hear it from his Father himſelf. *He was dead, but is alive again; he was loſt, but is found*, that is, he is a real convert. This is too much unbelief, not to believe the Servants teſtimony, unleſſe we have aſſurance from God of our Brethrens converſion. This, *ſtand by thy ſelf; come not near me, for I am holier than thou*, is it that oftentimes makes men Schiſmaticks from God's houſe, Saints and Servants, but theſe are ſo far from pleaſing God better than others, that he ſaith of them, *Theſe are a ſmoke in my noſtrils, a fire that conſumeth all the day long*, Iſa. 65. 5. Away then with theſe hangings back, and re-

 fuſals

ſufals of Chriſt, and the feaſt in him, or taking offence at the freeneſſe of God's grace to ſinners, or at our Brethren, for being or having been worſe than our ſelves, as we proudly think. If we will indeed make merry and be glad, better go in and ſit down, though there ſhould be one unworthy one there, that hath not on the Wedding Garment. He only, not we, for that ſhall be rejected, *Mat.*22.12.

3. Going into the houſe of God (that is, joyning up our ſelves to Chriſt and his people, that is, all them that call upon him in ſincerity, however they may have in ſome things done worſe than we, or differ from us) ſit down to meat there and eat, and drink at this feaſt. But here we muſt take heed that we take on with us the Wedding Garment (for this is a Wedding feaſt too) which is prepared alſo by the feaſt-maker for us as well as the feaſt, that is, that in our coming into the Church of Chriſt to joyn with Chriſt, and his people or worſhippers, we *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo as to come only upon the account of him, and the grace of God in him, not preſuming upon our own worthineſſe to approach his

his table, or lay claim to his proviſion, though alſo putting on his vertues in our believing in and on him. *Putting off the deeds of darkneſſe, put on the armour of light, not walking in ſurfettings and drunkenneſſe, chamberings and wantonneſſe, ſtrife and envyings; but put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, making no proviſion for the fleſh to fullfil it in the luſts thereof,* Rom. 13.12, 13, 14. that is, *put on as the Elect of God* in receiving the grace of God, as thoſe that are *holy & beloved* the vertues of Chriſt, *Bowels of mercy, meekneſſe, kindneſſe, humbleneſſe of mind,* &c. *Coll.* 3.13. Otherwiſe if we take up only the form of godlineſſe, and deny the power; the profeſſion, and deny ſubjection to Chriſt and his Spirit, we ſhall be caſt out again into outer darkneſs, *Mat.*22.13, but ſo coming and being entred, *Let us eat and be merry.* Unleſs we eat our meat, and drink our drink, that our heavenly Father hath provided for us, we ſhall never be merry. Faſting and mirth are not meet concomitants, but feaſting and mirth. Our Father hath killed for us the fatted calf; indeed he bid his Servants do it, and ſo they do

in a ſort, in their miniſterial holding forth Chriſt crucified for us. Yea, all are his ſervants, they that crucified Chriſt did but therein *what his hand and counſel had determined to be done*, Act. 4. 28. But the Son puts it upon the Father, *Thou haſt killed for him the fatted calf.* God hath prepared him for us, *delivered him up for our ſins, and raiſed him again for our juſtification.* Sets him forth in the Goſpel as a ſacrifice offered up for our ſins, and gives him to us as the bread of life to eye and believe in, exerciſe faith in, and ſo feed upon him. We are not put upon it, or called upon in this feaſt to bring any diſh with us, but only to eat what he hath prepared and made ready for us. It will make our Father's heart glad to ſee us accept his love, and eat heartily of his meat, and eat together like brethren lovingly. He will not think his fatted calf ill beſtowed on us, if we will but eat heartily on it. Yea, therein he hath delighted, its meat and drink to him his Sons obedience and righteouſneſſe, and in and through him, its as meat and drink to him to ſee us eat heartily on him too.

Do

Do not look upon our meat only (though its good to look on it too; for its ſo lovely, and altogether pleaſing to an enlightned eye, that it will allure us to eat) but alſo eat of it, feed on it, put it in our mouths, let it go down into our bellies or hearts. *Cauſe our bellies to eat, and fill our bowels with it*, Ezek. 3. 3. *If thou confeſſe with thy mouth Jeſus the Lord, and in thine heart believe that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Rom. 10. 10. But what have we no drink to our meat? yes, yes, I warrant you, our Father keeps a good bountiful houſe, he hath a cup of good wine for us, *ſpiced wine*, the moſt choiſe wine, the *blood of the grape*, and yet its but the fatted calf ſtill; *For his fleſh is meat indeed*, his being incarnate and made fleſh for us, his being delivered up to death for our ranſome and redemption. He, as therein the way for us to God, the mediator of God and us, the receptacle for us and convayer of the grace and bleſſing of God to us: This is our meat, and *its meat indeed. And his blood is drink indeed*, his abaſement and ſufferings as obtaining for us and con-

firming to us the New Teſtament, and its precious promiſes which are all in him (by vertue of this his moſt pretious blood obtaining for us the continual pardon of our ſins) yea, and Amen. Affirmed and confirmed, or ratified for and to us. This, this, and the love herein teſtified is drink indeed, *Joh.* 6. 55. *His love is better than wine, will cauſe the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak*, Cant. 2. 2. and 7. 9. come then, let us eat together of this meat, this is better than to feed on *the fleſh of our own arms*, Iſa. 9. 20. That's pittiful ſtuff, that is, what we can do and gather up to and for our ſelves by our own ſtrength, our faſtings, prayers, whinings, pinings, works of righteouſneſſe of our own doings, our humblings and ſelf abaſements, as reflected on by us. The fleſh and blood of this fatted calf is ten thouſand times better; it will make us ſtrong to labour and work what is good, and make us thankful to him that gives it to us, and to acknowledge our ſelves infinitely unworthy ſuch a diſh to have been prepared for us; but theſe things are the fruits and effects of it fed on, not

not the meat we are to eat, much leſſe what is but the iſſue of our own power and ſtrength. Come then Brethren, let us ſit at it here, and eat and drink heartily if we will be merry and glad, and make our Father merry and glad, and our Brethren merry and glad. *Let's eat, and drink, and be merry here.* This will never make us Epicures, *nor drunkards, nor riotous eaters of fleſh. Here is no exceſſe* in this feaſt, eat and drink of it what we can. *Eat we that that is good, and let our ſouls delight themſelves in fatneſſe.* Hereto we are invited and called upon, *Iſa.* 55. 2, 3. And here call we upon one another too, as our Lord doth upon us all. *Eat, oh friends, yea, drink, yea drink abundantly of my love* (as ſome tranſlate that) *Cant.* 5. 1. Our Father will never chide us or tax us for it, as gluttonous eaters of fleſh or drunkards. I ſay, for eating our fills here, nor ſhall we need to ſpare this fatted calf is a living diſh, that will grow upon us in the eating it; the more we eat the more we may eat, and the more we eat of it the more welcome. And the wine here will do like the oil in the miracle, in-

creaſe as we empty it, or drink of it. Here's a Princely feaſt, no law to limit us how much to eat or drink. Oh! that all the Epicures, drunkards and gluttons in the world would lay aſide their epicuriſm, in which they ſpend and waſt God's creatures, and break his laws, and bring upon themſelves miſery and deſtruction, and turn gluttons and drunkards here if they can. Yea, here its lawful and a priviledge to be drunken, for ſo ſome read that in *Cant.* 5. 1. *Drink, and be ye drunken, oh! my beloved,* or *with my love.* And to be ſure if Chriſt make men drunk, he will never fault them for it; if men drink here till they looſe their own underſtanding, reaſon, ſenſes, it will never harm them; for they looſe them not for the worſe, as in bodily and ſinful drunkenneſſe, to be made like beaſts; but for the better, to be made like Angels, or conformable to Chriſt. To be drunk into his Spirit, his will, mind, judgment, and to be carried above not beneath our ſelves. Here we may call for cups and flagons too, *Stay me with flagons,* Cant. 2. 5. *be not drunk with wine then, wherein is exceſſe,*

but

but be filled with the ſpirit of love, and of Chriſt, there's no exceſſe in that, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19. This wine will exhilarate or chear us, while it aſſures us of God's love in Chriſt, and aſcertains us of the injoyment of his promiſes, yea, and convays them to us. This wine will indeed make glad our hearts. *Let's eat, drink and be merry* then here (not *for to morrow we ſhall dye*, but) and we ſhall never dye. We ſhall never drink our ſelves dead here, as the drunkards of this world do, but we ſhall drink our ſelves alive, we ſhall drink death away, and drink our ſelves into eternal life. For *whoſo eateth my fleſh*, ſaith our Lord, *and drinketh my blood hath eternal life*, Joh. 6. 56. And this will beget mirth, and as it begets mirth, let us make it or be given up to it: For it makes us

4. Sing. Let us ſing the ſongs of *Sion*, not of fools, that know not of this feaſt: but of thoſe that are inſtructed into Chriſt by his Spirit, *a new ſong* even *praiſes to the Lord*, Pſal. 40. 2, 3. Lauding, and magnifying, and bleſſing the Lord; yea, and bleſſing, and commending the Lamb we eat of, or this fatted

calf, and the cup we drink, for its *a cup of bleſſing*, ſuch as it both yields bleſſing to us, and is to be bleſſed and magnified by us, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. *Take a Pſalm then*, *Pſal.* 81. 2. But how ſhall we come by it? why, drink but off our cups of the wine forementioned, and we ſhall have *Pſalms* ſpring up in us, as the ſpirit thereof alſo hath compoſed ſome by his ſervants the Prophets for us, and take we of them. *Be we filled with the Spirit* (in eating this meat and drinking, this drink foreſpoke of the love of God in Chriſt) *ſpeaking to our ſelves* (as implying that then we ſhall ſpeak, for it *will make the lips of them that are aſleep to ſpeak*, as was noted before in *Cant.* 7. 9. but not as drunkards often do in a ſinful way, but) *Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, ſinging and making melody in our hearts to the Lord*, that is, to the praiſing, commending, and glorifying him, *Epheſ.* 5. 18. 19. *Col.* 3. 16. Yea, and to help that

5. *Bring hither the Timbrel, and the pleaſant Harp, and the Pſaltery*, Pſal. 81. 2. We have muſick at this feaſt too to help our mirth, ſo we read *ver.* 25.

When

When the elder Son came out of the field, and drew nigh to the houſe, he heard muſick. Here was muſick it ſeems then, God allows his children muſick to their meat. So in *Rev.* 14. 2. *I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and they ſung as it were a new ſong before the throne, and all meat,* and ſongs, and muſick of our Fathers providing. *He gives us ſongs in the night too,* Job 36. 10. and *he gives gifts to men,* the inſtruments of muſick; we are bid only to bring them hither, bring them all to provoke this ſpiritual joy and mirth to be expreſſed at this feaſt; uſe all our gifts to further God's praiſe, and the joy of one another in the Lord. Muſick was uſed to ſtir them up, and help them in their ſongs, to ſing the more tunably and merrily, as there were in the ſanctuary, *The ſingers going before, and the players on inſtruments following after, in the midſt the Virgins or Damſels playing on Timbrels,* Pſal. 68. 26. Such a one was the Prophet *Ezekiel, As one that could play well upon an inſtrument, and had a pleaſant voice,* Ezek. 33. 32. or rather *like the lovely ſong of ſuch a one,* of the good

muſi-

musitian Christ himself, the Master of the musick; he that excelleth in skil, and tunes all the instruments and plays upon them with his hand, or breaths in them; whose eares and hearts being bored are made as wind instruments to receive his divine breath & inspirations; and to whom (namely Christ) all the Psalms and Songs of *Sion* are dedicated. Such musitians and instruments of musick also subordinately too are Gospel-Preachers skillful in the praises of the Lord, and to direct others in their acknowledgments and confessions of him; *Blowing up the Trumpets, as in the new Moon, and playing upon the Tabret, the merry harp, and Lute.* To whose musick diligently attending, our hearts will be composed for the accesses and impressions of the holy Spirit upon us (as the Prophet *Elisha* in 2 *King.* 3. 15.) and we shall be framed both *to sing*, and as pleasant instruments *to make melody to the Lord.* Primely the Prophets and Apostles, and those that are endewed with, and exercise their heavenly and spiritual gifts, as helpers of our joy, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. To their sound, to their joyful

joyful ſound attending: *Sing we merrily to God our ſtrength, and make a chearful noiſe to the God of Jacob*, as the *Vulgar* reads it, *Pſal.* 81. 1, 2. with 89. 15. And to make our mirth compleat.

6. *Dance.* That was here too, *ver.* 25. *Muſick and dancing.* A regular motion of the body is dancing (but here of the heart, as in *Pſal.* 28. 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength, and my ſhield, my heart hath truſted in him, and I was helped, therefore my heart danceth,* וַעֲלִילֶנּוּ (ſo ſome render the Hebrew) *and with my ſong will* I praiſe him) according to the modulations of the muſick (the heavenly muſick made by the muſician, & muſitians and inſtruments before mentioned to the glory of God) not ſuch as tends to beget unclean luſts, as in bodily dancing of men and women promiſcuouſly together is often found, but to the provoking to heavenly, divine, and ſpiritual love to Chriſt, and of one another, and of Chriſt again to them all, in which if they be moved to a ſpiritual conjunction in the bed of divine love, as a chaſt Virgin all of them to Chriſt; yea, and if alſo they give and receive the immortal ſeed of

the

the Word of God betwixt themſelves promiſcuouſly either men with men, or any man with any women or men (though indeed there are neither male nor female in Chriſt Jeſus, but all are one) there is herein no turpitude or uncleanneſſe, nor will Chriſt ever reckon them therefore Adulterers or Harlots, but his chaſt Spouſe all of them; and own all the ſpiritual fruit or children ſo begot and born as his and holy to him, nor ſhall they ever be endited by him, or by any law of his, or agreeing with his, or be brought to ſuffer death for it upon the gallows; as for bodily and fleſhly uncleanneſſes they juſtly may. But

Injoying love in this Bridegrooms armes,
They ſhall be above all the fleſhes charmes.

And all this mirth and ſpiritual jollity, ſinging, dancing, proceeds from the ſpirit of this heavenly meat they feed on; about which therefore they may play, and ſing, and dance. For though it was idolatry, and heavily puniſhed of God, when *Iſrael* made a Golden Calf and danced about it; and ſo it is yet to make

make a calf of mens own ear-rings, jewels, or any gifts, parts, or works of righteouſneſſe, and ſacrifice to, and worſhip it: *Eating and drinking, and riſing up to play.* Yet it is no idolatry or ſin at all to worſhip this fatted calf, (ſo underſtood and interpreted for Chriſt) ſacrificing ſacrifices and ſongs of praiſe to it, eating and drinking of it, and riſing up to play, and dance about it, for this is none of our making. This is God's image in which he will be worſhipped of us, and which he will allow us to worſhip, ſing to, and rejoyce in, as one with himſelf. And indeed the God that gives us this mirth, and makes us able to play, and ſing, and dance: For its he that confirmes and *ſtrengthens our feeble knees, that were ready to knock together, and puts ſtrength into our ancle bones by his Name*, as he did to the lame mans, that lay at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, *Act.* 3. 7, 8, making him to *leap up, and ſtand, and walk; and to enter the Temple leaping, and walking, and praiſing God.* So doth his heavenly Name, in which is this ſpiritual food, this fleſh and wine

pro-

propoſed, ſtrengthen us to dance.

Leaping o're the Mountains,
Skipping o're the Hills;
Capring to thoſe Fountains,
Whence this liquor Drills.
Mounting up to Heaven,
And to Earth deſcending;
To ſhew unto Men
Where 'tis ſafe depending.

For this chear lifts up the heart above all fears, droopings, and diſcouragements, and above all towring objects of inticing vanities and allurements, to take a view and converſe with heaven; and then lets down again to men to ſhew forth the vertues and praiſes of the Lord to them; and guides in all to regular and heavenly ordered motions, according to the inſtructions of the grace and operations of the Spirit of God and Chriſt. No ſuch dancing, no ſuch mirth as this, which God allows his children, in which they may ſpend their days, and in a moment go up to heaven; contrary to that of the wicked and their children, *Job.*21.11,12,13.

With

With this were the Epicures and Pleaſure-mongers of this world acquainted, they would leave their drinking and drabbing their dandling and dancing to come to this feaſt; and would they come indeed hither, this loving Lord, and glorious feaſt-maker would intertain them as he did this Prodigal. Yea, and perſwades the Pharaſaical to agree with them therein, letting go their own righteouſneſſe (which is ſpiritual whoredome to adore, however much they make of it, and in the view of it look a ſquint at publicans and harlots received in) while they ſtumble at the grace of God to ſinners, and keep out from this fatted calf, they do but make golden calves of their own to delight in, worſhip, and dance about, and commit adultery, ſpiritual adultery (as bad in the ſight of God as bodily adultery) with. Though they think it their righteouſneſſe, its but ſtollen waters, bread eaten in ſecret, becauſe they think the table of the Lord contemptible, and his meat polluted by being expoſed to, and partook of by ſuch unholy ones in their apprehenſion. But, I ſay, God would perſwade

ſwade them relinquiſhing thoſe their ſtollen waters, and ſecret breads, to come and joyn with their penitent Prodigal Brethren in this feaſt of love, where they might eat, and drink, and ſing, and play, and dance, till they take a friſk at God's calling them out of the fleſh into the heavens, where they might everlaſtinglylive and love in the boſome of their Father, and embraces of the Lamb and ſing Hallelujahs forever and ever. *It is meet that we* (thus) *make merry, and be glad, for thi. thy Brother was dead, but is alive again, was loſt, but is found.*

Bleſſed be God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

The Concluſion in ſome Poems.

Pſalm. 23.

THe Lord's my Shephead, I ſhan't want
In paſtures green he feeds me.
And there to lye down doth me grant,
And by ſtill waters leads me.
My fainting Soul he doth reſtore,
And guides me in right ways
For his own names ſake. I therefore
To him ſing laud and praiſe.
And though with death, and grim deſpaire
I grapple I'le not care:
For thou art with me, thy Scepter
And ſtaffe my comforts are.
Thou doſt ſupport me by thy power,
Thy ſtrength is all my ſtay;
And by the ſame what would devour
Thou driveſt far away.
In midſt of my disdainful foes
My table thou doſt ſpread
My cup of comfort overflows
Thy balm anoints my head.

Thy

Thy mercy and goodneſſe alway
Shall compaſſe me about,
And in thine houſe I'le ever ſtay,
And never more go out.

Amen. Finis.

---

1. *Spring up, O well, to it we'l ſing*
The praiſes of the Lord.
Let each muſitian ſtrike his ſtring,
And all herein accord.
2. *Oh Lord how wondrous is thy love!*
What one is like to thee.
It doth exceed, and goes above
All things that we can ſee.
3. *The heaven above, the earth beneath,*
And all that is therein
Do ſhew it: yea, it ſhines through death
And gloryeth over ſin.
4 *What is it thou haſt done or ſaid*
Ere ſince the world began.
Yea, or before the world was made,
Wherein thou eyd'ſt not man!
5. *Didſt thou not all things for him make,*
And all things to him give?
Thou ſhew'dſt the courſe that he ſhould take,
That he might ever live.

6. *Nay,*

6. *Nay when he heedleſs of thy love*
Againſt thee did rebel;
Thy only goodneſs did thee move,
To care he might do well.
7. *When he forlorn, and all undone,*
Helpleſs and hopeleſs was,
Thou then ſent'ſt forth thine only Son,
Thy will to bring to paſs.
8. *Which was, this wretched Man to raiſe,*
Through his own Death and Blood;
Unto a ſtate more worthy praiſe,
Then that where firſt he ſtood.
9. *Him thou declar'ſt, and to him call'ſt*
Thy very enemies:
By him thou heal'ſt their wounds and falls,
And Fools thou makeſt wiſe.
10. *They that obeying to him come,*
To them thou doſt impart
Thy ſelf, and all things; ſo great room
Have they within thine heart.
11. *They that refuſe, or from him ſtray,*
Thou doſt not preſently
In wrath deſtroy, or caſt away;
Being loath that they ſhould dy.
12. *Thou uſeſt means them to reclaim*
By ſweets, and ſowers, as thou
Who all things knowſt, doſt ſee their frame,
And what may make them bow.

13 *When*

13. *When vileſt Sinners worthieſt*
Of Wrath, to thee return;
Thou intertain'ſt them with the beſt;
Thou glad'ſt them when they mourn.
14. *Thou ſuch a Feaſt for ſuch haſt made,*
As ſhews thy love moſt dear
To Mankind: Oh it can't be ſaid
How vertuous it's chear!
15. *A fatted Calf thou haſt prepar'd,*
More than the world to thee;
Which to Men worthleſs of regard,
Thou giv'ſt their Meat to be.
16. *This fatted Calf help us to praiſe,*
So long as we remain.
When we are down it doth us raiſe,
And make us ſtrong again.
17. *His Fleſh as meat the Soul doth feed,*
His Blood Man's Heart doth chear:
He's ſuch a Robe as Sinners need;
None like it can we wear.
18 *With Songs and Muſick here our hearts*
Rejoyce may: and nothing
Of worth there is, but this imparts
Us unto bliſs to bring.
19. *Dear Lord, clear up our eyes that we*
More clearly may diſcern.
The vertues in this Food that be,
And cauſe us them to learn.

20. *Come*

20. *Come all ye Sinners far and near,*
Let go what doth you kill;
Come hither. Taſt this dainty chear,
And eat thereof your fill.
21. *Here you may eat, and drink, and ſport,*
And heavenly pleaſures get;
Riches, and honours, and comforts,
Wherof none may you let.
22. *Here's that will ſatisfie your hearts,*
When all things elſe prove vain:
Here's that will cure your wounds & ſmarts
And make you whole again. (eye
23. *Come murmuring* Momus *too, whoſe*
Doth grudge to ſee our Chear:
Let go, diſdain, Pride *and* Envy;
Here's room too for thee here.
24. *Think not thy ſelf too good for thoſe*
That intertain'd here be:
For that thy proud thought will thee looſe,
If not let go by thee. (ſprings
25. *There's no true goodneſs but what*
From hence. What this doth give
Is food and phyſick, this all brings,
That tends to make us live.
26. *Yea, if from what in thee is wrought*
By feeding on this meat
Thou feed'ſt on, ſleighting this, to nought
Thoult come, and thy ſelf cheat.

27. *Who*

27. *Who keep to this, by this are kept*
To everlasting joy:
Who stray from this away are swept:
Evil will them destroy.
28. *Here is the Spring whence all good flows,*
Washing all ill away.
Here is the Light which all things shows,
And makes perpetual Day.
29. *This House of Mirth where this feast is,*
Is only that exceeds
The House of Mourning: for in this
There's to supply all needs.
30. *This is God's house. Let's here abide,*
Him hear, his Table taste:
His favour shall us safely hide,
While any heavens shall last.

Finis.

A spiritual Song.

1. *WHo can sing the songs of Sion?*
Who can dance the heavenly
Who can Judah's *valiant Lyon dance?*
Worthily with songs advance?
2. *They be happy souls indeed,*
And may sing all cares away.

Their

Their felicities exceed
All that we can think or say.
3. Come ye noble heaven-born spirits,
Joyning hearts, and clasping armes,
Rais'd up in your Saviours merits
Above griefs and fears of harmes;
4. Lift your feet from off the earth,
Not affecting things below:
View the place whence is your birth;
Let your lives your breedings shew.
5. Take good heed to all your motions,
And let all your turnings be,
Such as with the heavenly notions
Of the joyful sound agree.
6. Toward Sion set your faces:
Jump not with the worldly wise,
With the Saints keep equal paces;
Nimbly 'bove your droopings rise.
7. And to strengthen you the better
To performe the heavenly dance,
That you may break every fetter,
And your hearts to heaven advance.
8. Come and eat of the provision,
By our blessed Father made:
And therefrom by no misprision
Let your appetites be staid.
9. Come and eat the fatted Calf,
Taste and see how good the Lord is,

All the world the tenth of half
Its sweetness cannot afford us.
10. Then be gone thou fleshly pleasure,
And ye sensual delights:
Here's the mirth exceeds all measure,
Where no after sorrow bites.
11. Eat and drink then and be merry,
Here be wholesome dainty dishes,
Better wine than Sack and Sherry,
And all the Wine-biber wishes.
12. Better chear than Beeves and Muttons,
Partridge, Pheasant, Fallow Deer:
Come ye Drunkards, and ye Gluttons,
Eat, drink, and be merry here.
13. Yea, come Pleasure-mongers all,
Here be pleasures sweet and lasting:
To a feast I do you call,
Where be all things worth your tasting.
14. Where ye can't be Epicures,
Though you feast it day and night:
Our Law-maker us assures,
He will count it good and right.
15. Never such a feast as this,
Never such a merry meeting,
Where all People may have bliss,
Coming to it as is fitting.
16. Ye whom avarice makes vitious,
Here are riches worth your craving:

And

And ye proud men and ambitious
Buy these honours worth your having.
17. Ye who righteousness seek after,
And in works and frams would find it;
Here's the feast prepar'd for laughter
Isaac Sarah's Son; pray mind it.
18. Whom her Womb had not conceived
Till they eat the fat Calf slain.
Till the mystery be believed,
All your labour's, but in vain.
19. Come my Brethren let's be chearful,
Though earth and hell, 'gainst us plot;
Feeding here we shan't be fearfull.
They may kill yet harme us not.
20. The Vertues and Medicine
Which this fatted Calf doth give;
Do afford such joys Divine,
As in Death will make us live.
21. Blessed be the God above,
Who his own Son hath not spared.
Blest that Lover, and that Love,
Which for us vile sinners cared.
22. And this food is worthy praises,
Honour, glory, thanks, and bliss,
Which from Death and hell up-raises
To such merriment as this.

FINIS.

Errata.

Page 7. line 23. read when, p. 10 in the Marg. r. Æ inean, p. 18. l. 16. r. lye, p. 19. l. 24. r. likeness, p. 32. l. 24. r. fellows, p. 49. l. 21. r. obstance, p. 50. l. 27. r. righteous, p. 51. l. 2. adde, and turned from them, p. 62 l. 25. r. may we, p. 81. l. 1. r now, p. 109. l. 3. put a full stop at whole, p. 119. l. 14. r while he and they, p. 121 l. 3. r. 33. p. 129. l. 8. r. watcheth the just, p. 137. l. 8. r. spots off, p. 141. l. 12. r. converst, p. 161. l. 19. r. incircling, p. 163. l. 10. r Zech 10, p. 169 l. 26. put a full stop at us, p. 207 l. 19 for delight, r. ought, p. 210. l. 15. r. and 19. 27, p. 214 l. 10. r. cut off, p. 216 l. 16. r. reviving, p. 219 l. 15 r. his, p. 224. l. 10. for and r. or, p. 234. l. 8. for God, r. men, p. 235. l. 4. r. with God, p. 239 l. 18. for ut r. as, and l. 28 for to r. so, p. 240. l. 27. r. Son, p. 249. l. 24. for asking r. using, p. 255. l. 20. put a stop at salvation, and l. 26. at found, p. 258. l. 5. r. stumble p. 275. l. 8. for health r. hearts, p. 277 l. 13. r. lead, p. 286. l. 9 for slaughter r. laughter, p. 290. l. 25. r. put on p. 309. l. 1. for the r. thy.